

# FY2023 PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN



NASAA's **strategic plan** charts NASAA's long-term course. It asserts why state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) matter to America, the goals we'll pursue and the enduring values that govern our decisions. **Action plans** articulate the specific steps NASAA will take to fulfill our mission—*to strengthen state arts agencies*—and respond to the continually evolving needs of our membership. Action plans are a mixture of:

- **Key issues:** Certain action items respond to emerging issues and immediate state needs. These products and services are specifically attuned to current events and fluctuate from year to year.
- **Core services:** In addition to short-term or situational activities, strengthening state arts agencies also requires continuity of effort. To this end, NASAA maintains a portfolio of core services upon which our member agencies can rely over time.

Additionally, **certain activities—a blend of key issues and core services—are designated as priorities.** Even if resources and circumstances shift unexpectedly during the course of the upcoming year, NASAA will ensure that this shorter list of activities receives priority attention.

Action plans are organized around the goals and objectives of NASAA's [strategic plan](#). This architecture ensures that NASAA's day-to-day activities align with our strategic directions and that we don't get drawn off course.

## GENESIS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 ACTION PLAN

This document originates from a member-driven process that included:

- mining [questions that members and advocates are asking](#),
- conducting [field interviews](#) to secure feedback and planning input from 83 state and jurisdictional arts agency executive directors and council chairs (who represent many diverse sectors and occupations),
- listening to needs expressed in peer group dialogues convened from October 2021 through July 2022, and
- convening planning conversations with the [NASAA board of directors](#) (representing a mixture of 22 state, regional and at-large perspectives) and the [Planning & Budget Committee](#).

### Member Planning Input, Summer 2022



Using this field input as a guide, the NASAA staff and our Planning & Budget Committee then developed the action plan for review by the Assembly's voting membership.

## KEY ISSUES FOR FY2023



### Advocacy

Budget cutbacks and political threats may intensify in some states as federal pandemic relief ends and political polarization ratchets up. NASAA will help state arts agencies to prepare for these exigencies. Our advocacy at the federal level and propagation of advocacy best practices at the state level will demonstrate our bipartisan values. We'll equip state arts agencies and cultural advocates alike to make a convincing, evidence based case for the arts as a worthwhile and necessary use of public funds.



### Equity

Our recently revised [strategic plan](#) reinforces NASAA's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across all of our four goals. Recognizing that there is no single way to advance equity, NASAA will provide models and guidance to help state arts agencies advance DEI in a variety of political settings. NASAA will prioritize grant-making equity in 2023, elevating strategies that states can use to make public arts funding more responsive and accessible. NASAA also will conduct the first phase of our own equity audit.



### Resiliency

Even as they strive to help constituents adapt to postpandemic realities and ongoing upheaval, state arts agencies are facing their own challenges with fatigue, burnout and workforce reductions. NASAA will encourage our members to foster personal and professional resilience in multiple ways. We'll circulate relevant information, expand supportive affinity group offerings, and apply a resilience lens to the design of new leadership development programs.

## ACTION PLAN KEY



Activity associated with FY2023 key issues. Activities without a topical tag are core/ongoing services.



New or expanded activity for FY2023



Priority for FY2023 (key issue and/or core service)

## GOAL I. ADVOCATE FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES.

### A. Advocate for a robust and well-funded National Endowment for the Arts.

	1	Advocate for the House and Senate appropriations committees, and Congress as a whole, to grow National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funding.
	2	Maintain the federal policy language reserving 40% of NEA grant funds for state and regional Partnership Agreements.
	3	Sustain effective working partnerships with NEA leadership.
	4	Represent the interests of SAAs to the NEA on programmatic and policy issues, particularly around reporting requirements, equity work and preserving the flexibility of Partnership Agreement funds for SAAs.
	5	Issue timely advocacy alerts and mobilize members around calls to action.
	6	Help advocates illustrate the reach of federal arts funding and the federal-state partnership by equipping them with maps of NEA and SAA grants by congressional district.
	7	Participate in inclusive federal coalition advocacy efforts with diverse networks advancing federal cultural policy.
	8	Facilitate purposeful contacts that deepen advocacy relationships with key appropriators. Collaborate with SAAs to identify persuasive advocates from selected districts and coordinate meetings with members of Congress and Capitol Hill staff. Equip advocates to educate lawmakers about current arts priorities, using NASAA's advocacy messaging research.

### B. Develop other federal resources and relationships beneficial to state arts agencies.

	1	Share information about how state governments and SAAs are deploying federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to spur economic recovery and community healing through the arts.
	2	Update the <a href="#">Creative Placemaking Public Resources Guide</a> to reflect the latest information on federal resources that can be harnessed to support the arts in community development.
	3	Monitor efforts to advance federal creative economy legislation in 2023, looking for windows of opportunity for new policies to progress with Congress.
	4	Consult with the NEA on emerging interagency partnerships. Keep SAAs apprised of opportunities to learn from or amplify those efforts.

### C. Strengthen state level advocacy practices.

	1	Provide confidential, customized guidance to individual SAAs to manage legislative crises and to develop advocacy strategies to secure state funds for the arts.
 	2	Advise SAAs on how to prepare for new arts controversies that may erupt in a highly polarized political environment.
	3	Monitor state legislation relevant to the arts and equity issues. Alert members to policy trends affecting SAAs.
	4	Demonstrate how advocates can deploy research based advocacy messaging strategies. This will include a major revision of <a href="#">Why Should Government Support the Arts</a> to strengthen its appeal across the political spectrum.
	5	Supply talking points and customized return-on-investment fact sheets to support state level advocacy.
	6	Propagate advocacy best practices through NASAA's Practical Advocate series and through advocacy briefings conducted at the request of citizen advocacy groups and SAA councils.
	7	Communicate regularly with state arts advocacy organizations to share research and data relevant to state level advocacy.
	8	Participate in national and regional networks of state level cultural advocates. Represent the interests of SAAs and the importance of bipartisan advocacy approaches in those forums.
	9	Encourage consultation between SAAs and state advocacy groups.

### D. Foster cross-sector support and strategic partnerships to benefit state arts agencies.

	1	Increase communications with influential policy networks such as the <a href="#">National Governors Association</a> , the <a href="#">National Conference of State Legislatures</a> , and policy leaders in the economic development, community development and health sectors. Craft communications to elevate research evidence about the community, economic and health benefits of the arts.
	2	Promote NASAA's collaboration with the <a href="#">National League of Cities</a> to accentuate the arts as a vehicle for public health and community well-being.
	3	Deepen relationships with organizations such as the <a href="#">National Council on Aging</a> , <a href="#">ADvancing States</a> (the association of state departments on aging), the <a href="#">National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (USAgging)</a> , private funding prospects and other aging allies to raise awareness about creative aging and connect SAAs to potential partners. <b>[Contingent upon securing renewed funding.]</b>
	4	Through the <a href="#">Education Commission of the States</a> and the <a href="#">Arts Education Partnership</a> (AEP), encourage the adoption of state policies and practices that strengthen arts learning.

	5	Participate in the <a href="#">National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response</a> steering committee and circulate related resources on the topics of COVID-19 and readiness for other crises.
	6	Represent SAAs with <a href="#">Grantmakers in the Arts</a> and its <a href="#">Cultural Policy Action Lab</a> .
	7	Promote strategies SAAs are using to develop cross-sector resources and relationships to empower their state level work. Showcase partnerships that SAAs are pursuing within and outside of state government.

## GOAL II. HONE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES.

### A. Supply authoritative facts about state arts agencies.

	1	Produce timely and comprehensive information about SAA budget trends, revenue sources and dedicated/supplemental revenue streams.
	2	Furnish information on the structure of SAAs and the effects of shifts on SAA placement within state government.
	3	Disseminate new 2022 data on SAA compensation, staffing and agency demographics. Provide benchmarking services and trend overviews to help SAAs make the case for more human resources.
	4	Provide data on SAA and regional arts organization (RAO) grant-making outlays. Summarize the distribution of grants made with state and federal funds as well as the guidelines and grant-making policies that shape state grant investments.
	5	Maintain public clearinghouses of seminal SAA policy documents, such as strategic plans, authorizing statutes and the <a href="#">Interactive Database of State Creative Economy Studies</a> .
	6	Collaborate with the NEA to visualize state level employment and GDP data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis's Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account.
	7	In cooperation with the NEA, analyze the distribution and impact of NEA American Rescue Plan relief funds administered by SAAs and RAOs.
	8	Contribute expertise and information to arts research initiatives relevant to SAAs.

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

	1	Fulfill member <a href="#">information requests</a> , providing prompt and customized responses to SAA inquiries.
	2	Promote maps, data visualizations and interactive tools that facilitate SAA benchmarking and help members understand and communicate information.

	3	Conduct Research Briefings that acquaint members with NASAA research products and help members use the information at the state level.
	4	Provide research consulting services to support individual members' strategic planning, data analysis and evaluation efforts. <b>[This is a fee-based custom service.]</b>
	5	In cooperation with the NEA, provide technical assistance and documentation to help SAAs and RAOs fulfill federal reporting requirements.
	6	Administer a survey to SAAs and RAOs to enhance understanding of data collection and utilization practices.
	7	Advise the NEA on how future changes to federal reporting requirements may affect SAAs and RAOs.

**C. Catalyze state arts agency innovation, improvement and change.**

	1	Showcase SAAs' program and policy ingenuity as well as exemplary practices through State to State, Strategy Samplers and Policy Brief reports.
		Harness the power of research to advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) among SAAs:
		Promote lessons learned from NASAA's role in the Equitable Grant-making Assessment Pilot Project (a.k.a. the Equity GAP Project) to demonstrate how SAAs can examine and improve the policies and procedures used to distribute operating support grant funds.
		Promote lessons learned from NASAA's role in California's equitable grant-making portfolio analysis project.
		In cooperation with the NEA, produce new geospatial analyses of state and regional grant-making data, to deepen understanding of how public funds reach underserved communities.
		Create an enhanced Visualizing Equity in Grant Making mapping tool with expanded geographic and demographic data to inform and support equitable SAA grant making.
		Using the Final Report and Application Database as a resource, facilitate SAA discussions around data being collected that can be useful to measuring progress in equitable grant making.
		Collect and circulate examples of SAA DEI plans.
		Share models of DEI programs, tools and research adopted by SAAs and other networks.
		Provide examples and guidance for strategies SAAs can use to engage Native and Indigenous communities.
		Launch a new "Everyday Equity" series of brief reports or blog posts that offer concise treatment of equity issues relevant to SAAs and recommendations for further reading.
	3	Advance SAA creative aging practices by seeking additional funding to deepen the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative. Provide ongoing support for NASAA's grantee cohort and help other states and jurisdictions learn from their experiences in meaningfully engaging older adults as an underserved population. <b>[Contingent upon securing renewed funding.]</b>

	4	Curate and circulate research from non-NASAA sources to inform members about trends, data and evaluation methods relevant to the work of SAAs.
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**D. Deliver educational programs that boost members' knowledge, leadership skills and resilience.**

	1	Reconceive Leadership Institute convenings to better serve SAAs. Develop an agile and cost-effective retreat model that can offer an immersive and accessible learning and community-building experience for SAA leaders. Complete the site selection and event design, with the goal of convening the inaugural State Arts Agency Executive Leadership Retreat in fall 2023.
	2	Deliver year-round online professional development sessions. Offerings will prioritize topics relating to key issues for 2023 and will be relevant to all SAA staff groups as well as to council/board members. Allied networks (RAOs, state advocacy groups, SAA partners, etc.) will be encouraged to attend relevant sessions.
	3	Cooperate with the NEA to present the 2023 State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute.
	4	Cooperate with the NEA to present the second annual professional development institute for staff administering folk and traditional arts partnership programs.
	5	Convene a second virtual Creative Aging Institute for all SAAs and their creative aging partners in November 2022. With the support of E.A. Michelson Philanthropy, use this professional development event to grow the creative aging knowledge and skills of SAAs and other providers serving older adults.
	6	Provide informal learning and networking opportunities to support mindfulness and workplace well-being for SAA staff and council members.
	7	Begin planning for the NASAA Assembly 2024 conference, to take place in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

**GOAL III. CONNECT STATE ARTS AGENCIES.**

**A. Keep state arts agencies informed through timely, relevant and accessible communications.**

	1	Distribute systematic communications to members through timely e-mail messages, our monthly newsletter, Report to Councils, Legislative Alerts and NASAA's social media channels.
	2	Incorporate resiliency resources into each edition of NASAA's monthly newsletter.
	3	Maintain the currency of the NASAA website. Evaluate content and technology for usability and accessibility, including adding alt text to images and adjusting data visualizations to improve access for individuals with low vision.

	4	Update the Inclusive Language Guide and incorporate key concepts into editorial guidance for NASAA publications and communications.
	5	Maintain media monitoring systems to track coverage of SAAs, NASAA and the NEA.
	6	Achieve greater cohesion for NASAA's visual identity by aligning our website, reports and collateral materials to updated style guidelines and NASAA's new logo.

**B. Facilitate peer-to-peer networking.**

	1	Continue to coordinate year-round peer group conversations and networking for job-alike groups. Provide virtual platforms, coordinate logistics and recruit volunteers to lead discussions.
	2	Maintain listservs to facilitate rapid information sharing for SAA executive directors, deputy directors, accessibility coordinators, arts education managers, community arts managers, gallery managers, grants officers, public information officers, traditional arts managers and other interest groups.
	3	Cultivate an SAA community of practice around DEI: Sustain an affinity group for SAA staff and council members of color. Support a listserv and online resource hub for the People of Color Affinity Group. Sustain the mentorship program for SAA staff and council members of color. Support the Arts Education Working Group's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion + Access Committee and its linkages to the arts education peer group as a whole. Infuse discussions about DEI into dialogues among all SAA peer groups. Update NASAA's referral directory of facilitators and consultants offering DEI expertise to SAAs.
 	4	Convene a "Red State Caucus" to serve as an affinity group for SAA leaders operating in conservative political environments. Facilitate dialogue on issues such as advocacy positioning, framing equity work, managing controversies, cultivating conservative arts champions and other topics.
	5	In cooperation with the NEA, maintain orientation systems for new arts education managers.
	6	In cooperation with the NEA, provide a program to support state level mentorships between veteran folk arts managers and newcomers to the traditional arts field.

**C. Promote the understanding and use of NASAA services.**

	1	Initiate outreach to all 56 member agencies throughout the year, with an emphasis on states that use NASAA services less frequently.
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	2	Support newly appointed executive directors:
		Conduct onboarding calls to provide orientations to NASAA.
		Tailor follow-up resources to new directors' near-term priorities.
		Maintain continuity of contact through regular check-in communications.
	3	Offer video conference briefings/presentations about NASAA services for SAA council meetings.

**D. Engage members in the governance, planning and advocacy work of the Assembly.**

	1	Sustain a member-driven governance model, reaching out to every member state and jurisdiction through NASAA's annual nominations process to recruit leadership for NASAA's board.
	2	Cultivate a robust pipeline of SAA candidates for future NASAA leadership roles, with an emphasis on racial/ethnic, geographic, age, gender and political diversity.
	3	Engage SAAs in NASAA's annual action planning through the Planning & Budget Committee and ongoing member feedback loops.
	4	Engage the membership in NASAA's fund development through the involvement of the board, the Development Committee and donors.
	5	Involve the board and membership in NASAA's financial oversight through participation in the Audit Committee.
	6	Promote governance transparency by encouraging members to observe NASAA board meetings and communicating regularly with the membership about the board's work.

**GOAL IV. BUILD NASAA'S CAPACITY.**

**A. Develop and diversify NASAA's revenues.**

	1	Manage NASAA's financial assets and cash flow for short- and long-term stability.
	2	Sustain NEA Partnership grant and cooperative agreement support for NASAA.
	3	Implement the last year of NASAA's FY2018-2023 dues plan (including a temporary suspension of escalators). Prepare for implementation of the plan for 2024 and beyond.
	4	Develop foundation funding for NASAA's work, with special attention to opportunities for equity work, operating support and leadership development programs.
	5	Encourage individual giving to NASAA by engaging our donor base and sustaining the Annual Fund Donors and Signature Supporters programs.

	6	Opportunistically realize earned income through consulting contracts or partnerships that align with NASAA's core mission and services. Update NASAA's business practices for promoting and delivering these services.
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**B. Develop NASAA's human resources.**

	1	Provide staff professional development that supports service delivery and staff growth and productivity.
	2	Embody NASAA's diversity, equity and inclusion principles throughout our recruitment practices and organizational culture. Conduct a comprehensive equity audit of NASAA's policies and practices, governance, communications, and member support services. Reinvent staff performance standards to address DEI.
	3	Adopt policies and management practices that intentionally foster staff morale, cohesion and well-being.
	4	Conduct personnel evaluations in alignment with NASAA's annual work plans and employee performance standards.

**C. Improve NASAA's operations and technology.**

	1	Continue to evolve practices and efficiencies around our hybrid work model. implement plans for decreasing NASAA's physical space to conserve additional resources and align our office footprint with a largely remote workforce.
	2	Continue to maximize use of NASAA's database for billing, communications, events and other management functions. Maintain the currency of NASAA's membership contact data.
	3	Continually improve NASAA's operational technology to support productivity and member services.
	4	Identify and test an online community networking platform for members, to provide connectivity beyond the NASAA listservs.
	5	Assess functional needs and possible solutions for upgrading NASAA's research database systems.
	6	Upgrade payroll services to help NASAA better navigate benefits and regulations in multiple states. Move staff timesheets online.
	7	Manage NASAA's administrative systems and physical office to support staff productivity and effective service delivery to members.
	8	Maintain NASAA's accountability standard, internal controls, and federal reporting and risk management procedures.

**D. Evaluate our work and learn from the results.**

	1	In conjunction with NASAA's new strategic plan, revisit what performance measurement systems would be useful for planning and accountability. Prepare new systems for implementation in 2024.
	2	Report to the membership through <a href="#">Action Plan Highlights</a> and <a href="#">DEI action reports</a> that summarize NASAA's progress and recent accomplishments.
	3	Conduct phone <a href="#">interviews</a> (in conjunction with the Nominating Committee process) of every state and jurisdiction to collect feedback on member satisfaction and member needs. Use the information to shape NASAA's action planning.
	4	Use website analytics, social media metrics and bulk e-mail data to guide NASAA's communications.
	5	Track information requests and <a href="#">mine the data</a> to inform NASAA's research services and technical assistance.
	6	Evaluate NASAA Assembly 2022 and use the information to inform future professional development programs.
	7	Conduct an annual financial and compliance audit to maintain high standards of accountability.
	8	Conduct an annual employee survey to monitor staff satisfaction and working conditions. Adopt management practices that respond to staff concerns.