

# STATE ARTS AGENCY VITAL STATISTICS

National Assembly of  
State Arts Agencies

## STATE ARTS AGENCY VITAL STATISTICS 2019

NASAA Planning & Budget Committee  
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In conjunction with adopting a [strategic plan](#) in 2018, NASAA began monitoring a suite of indicators of state arts agency (SAA) well-being. Because NASAA's ultimate mission is *to strengthen state arts agencies*, it's important to assess the condition and stability of our members over time.

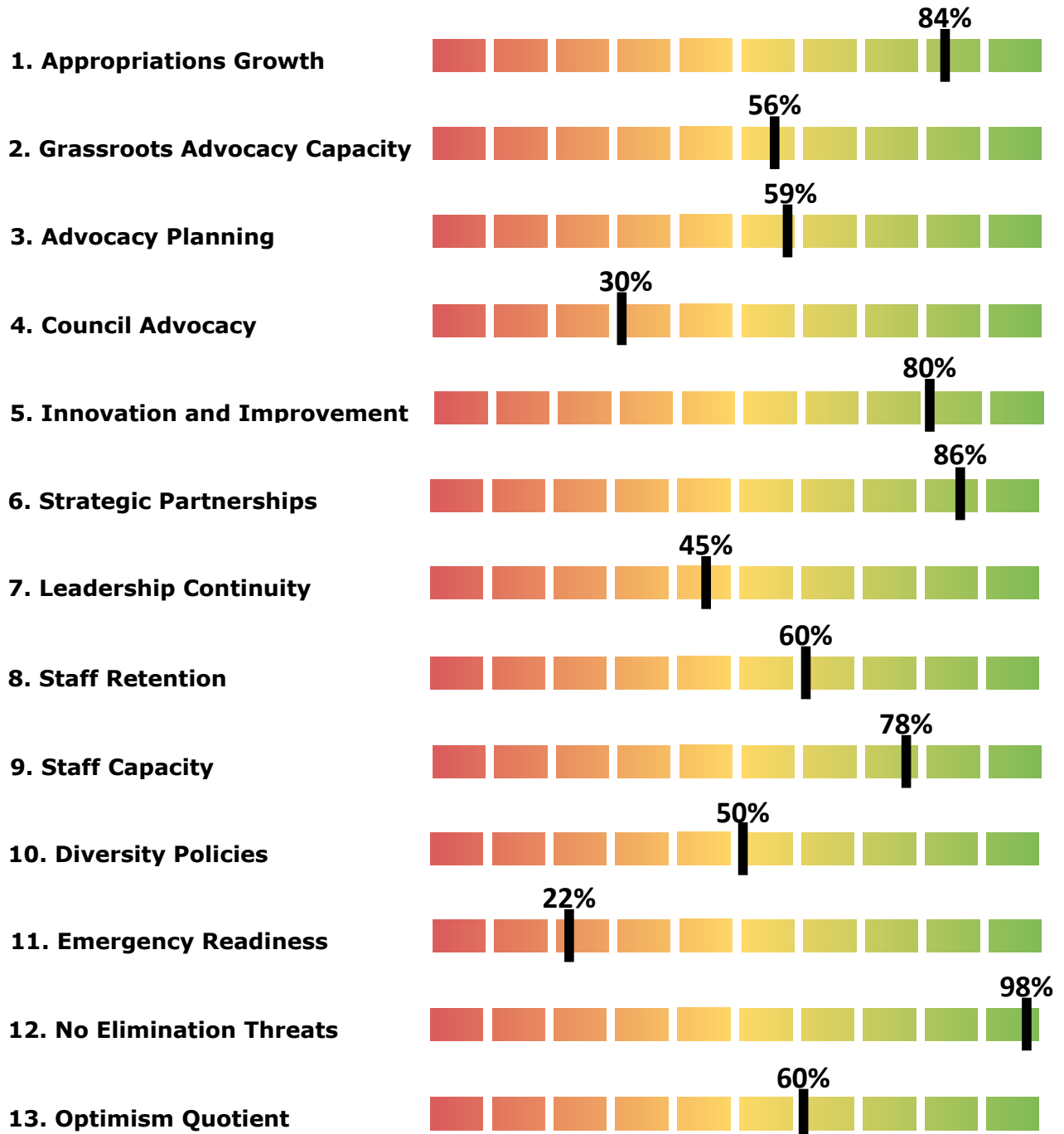
The thirteen indicators NASAA's Planning & Budget Committee selected for tracking include some typical vital statistics of organizational strength as well as some measures unique to state arts agencies. Since this information must come from state arts agencies, themselves, we've kept the list short to reduce the survey burden NASAA places on members. **Results are being reported only in aggregate form and individual assessments are kept confidential** to encourage full candor in state arts agency reporting.

The Planning & Budget Committee monitors this data and develops recommendations to address the results. The vital statistics are used in conjunction with NASAA's [Performance Measurement Dashboard](#) as well as ongoing member input, [data-mining](#), [action plan progress reports](#) and in-depth [program evaluations](#) to inform annual action planning and continual program improvement.

In the future, the committee may adjust the measures and targets as needed. Until that time, these thirteen metrics offer useful reference points. Our field is diverse, so individual metrics may be more applicable to some state arts agencies than to others. But, taken as a whole, this suite of indicators reflects important capacities and attributes toward which state arts agencies can collectively aspire.

## State Arts Agency Vital Statistics: 2019 Summary

NASAA conducted our inaugural Vital Statistics poll of state arts agency (SAA) executive directors in May of 2018. The second year of the survey was conducted May of 2019. Unless otherwise noted in the definitions, this report contains 2019 data and compares it to data collected in 2018. The 2019 survey received 50 responses from 49 states and one jurisdiction.



## State Arts Agency Vital Statistics: Details and Definitions

### 1. Appropriations Stability & Growth

Indicator	<b><i>SAA legislative appropriations rise or hold steady.</i></b>
Data Source	Annual legislative appropriations and revenue survey
Target	56 agencies, 100% rise or hold steady
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>47 agencies, 84% of goal 2018-2019</b>
Change from 2018	Up from 66% in 2017-2018 (37 agencies)

### 2. Grassroots Advocacy Capacity

Indicator	<b><i>A functional citizen advocacy organization exists in every state.</i></b>
Data Source	SAA polling. "Functional" will be defined as having paid personnel (staff or contract).
Target	50 states (data is not available for jurisdictions)
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>28 agencies, 56% of goal as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Up from 54% in 2018 (27 agencies)

### 3. Advocacy Planning

Indicator	<b><i>SAA's adopt plans that include explicit commitments to advocacy or policy advancement.</i></b>
Data Source	Inventory of the goals and objectives contained in SAA strategic plans
Target	54 agencies (plans are not available for two jurisdictions)
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>32 agencies, 59% of goal as of May 2019</b>
<b>Change from 2018</b>	No change: 59% of goal (32 agencies)

Some state arts agencies face regulatory constraints on how their plans are developed or articulated. Nevertheless, this is one usefully objective way (when used in conjunction with other indicators) to capture the degree to which SAAs are equipping themselves to advocate, within their limits.

### 4. Council Advocacy

Indicator	<b><i>SAA councils have standing advocacy committees or adopt formally articulated advocacy responsibilities.</i></b>
Data Source	SAA polling
Target	56 councils (100%)
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>17 agencies, 30% of goal as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 38% in 2018 (21 agencies)

All state arts agencies face constraints on lobbying, but *advocacy* limits vary from state to state.

## 5. Innovation and Improvement

Indicator	<b><i>SAA's initiate continual change and improvement.</i></b>
Data Source	SAA polling, supplemented by ongoing State to State scanning. New initiatives or improvement efforts may include partnerships, grant programs, non-grant services, technology solutions, research activities or policy innovations.
Target	56 agencies (100%) report at least one significant new effort in the past 12 months
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>40 agencies, 80% of survey respondents (50) as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 82% of survey respondents (45 out of 55) in 2018

## 6. Strategic Partnerships

Indicator	<b><i>Partnerships substantially expand SAA's capacity to serve the public.</i></b>
Data Source	Annual poll. Criteria include partnerships that expand services to the public or strengthen SAA's human resources, financial resources or influence.
Target	56 agencies (100%) report the presence of substantial partnerships.
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>43 agencies, 86% of survey respondents (50) as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 100% of survey respondents (55 out of 55) in 2018

## 7. Leadership Continuity

Indicator	<b><i>SAA Executive Directors have tenure of at least 4 years.</i></b>
Data Source	NASAA member turnover tracking
Target	56 agencies (100%) meet the tenure criteria
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>25 agencies, 45% of goal as of June 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 54% of goal (30 agencies) as of June 2018

Given the learning curve required for this complex leadership position, it would be good to exceed this target in the future. But recent generational and political churn makes 4 years a more viable near-term goal.

## 8. Staff Retention

Indicator	<b><i>SAA's achieve median staff tenure (across all positions) of at least 5 years.</i></b>
Data Source	Periodic staff size and compensation surveys
Target	100% of survey respondents (56) meet the staff retention criterion.
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>33 agencies, 60% of goal as of Fall 2018</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 72% (36 agencies) in June 2017 – biennial survey

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, median tenure for all state employees is 5.8 years.

## 9. Staff Capacity

Indicator	<b><i>SAA personnel assets (staff and contract) hold steady or increase.</i></b>
Data Source	Periodic staff size and compensation surveys
Target	100% of survey respondents (50) staff capacity hold steady or increase.
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>39 agencies, 78% of goal as of Fall 2018</b>
Change from 2018	Up 70% in June 2017 (34 agencies)

## 10. Diversity Policies

Indicator	<b><i>SAAAs have enacted formal policies or statements advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.</i></b>
Data Source	Annual polling
Target	56 agencies (100%)
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>25 agencies, 50% of survey respondents (50) as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Up from 38% survey respondents (21 out of 55) in 2018

## 11. Emergency Readiness

Indicator	<b><i>SAAAs adopt formal emergency preparedness/contingency plans.</i></b>
Data Source	Annual polling
Target	56 agencies (100%)
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>11 agencies, 22% of survey respondents (50) as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 31% of survey respondents (17 out of 55) in 2018

## 12. No Elimination Threats

Indicator	<b><i>State legislatures do not attempt to eliminate SAAAs.</i></b>
Data Source	LegiScan state-level bill tracking system. Excludes government-wide shutdowns or dissolution/immediate reconstitution proposals. (Data is available only for the 50 states.)
Target	No (0) agencies faced elimination proposals.
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>1 agency, 98% of target as of May 2019</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 100% as of June 2018 (0 agencies)

Excludes restructuring proposals because sometimes those are initiated/welcomed by SAAAs... and sometimes not. But nobody welcomes elimination attempts. We hope this measure becomes obsolete.

### 13. Optimism Quotient

Indicator	<b><i>SAA leaders have a positive outlook about their agencies' future.</i></b>
Data Source	Annual poll
Target	56 agencies (100%) report a high degree of optimism / confidence.
<b>Latest Data</b>	<b>30 agencies, 60% of survey respondents (50)</b>
Change from 2018	Down from 69% of survey respondents (38 out of 55) in 2018