

# NASAA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of  
STATE ARTS AGENCIES

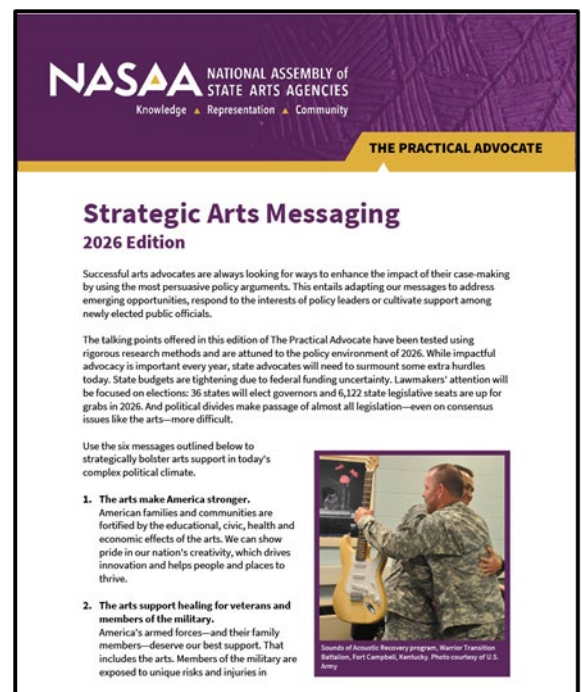
Knowledge ▲ Representation ▲ Community

Fiscal Year 2026 | Mid Year Report  
**Action Plan Highlights**

Organized around NASAA's [strategic plan](#), this report highlights key accomplishments from the first half of NASAA's fiscal year (October 2025 through March 2026).

## GOAL 1: ADVOCATE FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES.

- ▲ Strategic advocacy from NASAA and the states helped secure **\$207 million** for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for fiscal year 2026. Given the intense pressure to reduce federal spending, maintaining level funding for the NEA was a success. The budget enacted by Congress again designates 40% of the NEA's grant funds for states and regions, reaffirming the importance of **the federal-state partnership** and the [essential role](#) that state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) play in facilitating access to federal arts funding.
- ▲ As SAAs and advocates geared up for this year's legislative sessions, NASAA published [Strategic Arts Messaging](#), a new entry in NASAA's The Practical Advocate series. It provides advocates with strategic messaging guidance that has been rigorously tested and is customized to the current policy environment. It offers carefully researched messaging to strengthen public support for the arts in 2026—showing advocates how to make the case for public support of the arts as a core necessity.
- ▲ NASAA is hosting virtual briefings this winter and spring to **help members hone their advocacy messaging**. Tailored for executive directors, council members and SAA staff groups, the sessions share insights from a 2025 national poll commissioned by NASAA on conservative voter attitudes toward public funding for the arts. The briefings help members apply the poll's insights to strengthen their advocacy and communications at the state level.



- ▲ NASAA is actively supporting SAAs **navigating proposed budget cuts** and other threats. We are closely tracking FY2027 state budget proposals and governors' recommendations, including potential reductions to funding. We proactively reach out to states facing challenges, offering tailored, one-on-one support. This often includes providing customized impact data and connecting members with peers who have weathered similar situations.
- ▲ The **2025 edition of NASAA's [State Legislative Roundup](#)**, released in April, highlights state legislation affecting SAAs and their constituents across the country. By tracking key bills and emerging policy trends, the Roundup helps SAA staff, arts advocates and other stakeholders understand the cultural policy landscape and supports state level policy innovation.
- ▲ **Ensuring members stay informed** about federal policy developments remains a key priority. NASAA communicated with members about this fall's federal shutdown, the full FY2026 spending bill and what to expect in the early stages of the FY2027 federal budget. Alongside these updates, we provide trusted guidance to help members interpret and respond to the complexities of the current landscape.
- ▲ We continue to highlight the leadership role state arts agencies are playing in **America 250**. Since October we have featured [six SAA America 250 stories](#) in NASAA Notes, launched a [new web page](#) on the topic and hosted a [web seminar](#) to further share examples of state arts agency America 250 initiatives with the field.
- ▲ NASAA delivered numerous **presentations for state and local arts advocates**, arts funders, and other stakeholders. In doing so, NASAA offered national context, disseminated relevant research and shared strategic advocacy guidance. These efforts strengthen the ability of leaders at various levels to make a compelling, bipartisan case for government arts investment.

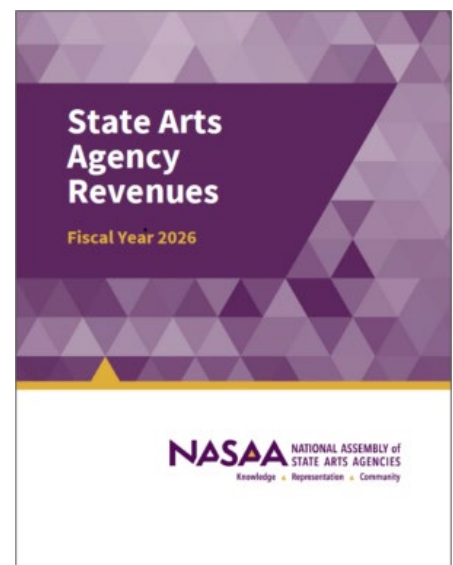
## GOAL 2: HONE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES.

- ▲ NASAA's collaboration with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy (EAMP) entered a new phase with the [Creative Aging, Creative Futures](#) initiative. In February, \$2,230,000 in creative aging grant funding was awarded to 28 state arts agencies. These grants will help SAAs promote creativity, learning, well-being and social engagement for older adults. In March, NASAA and EAMP launched the multiyear **Creative Aging Professional Learning Community**, open to all SAA and regional arts organization (RAO) staff with an interest in creative aging topics.



Photo courtesy of E.A. Michelson Philanthropy

- ▲ **NASAA is on call for members**, responding to their needs in real time. We have fulfilled **283** information requests so far this year. Popular topics included advocacy, federal policy and funding, and SAA executive leadership. Each inquiry receives a customized response.
- ▲ In partnership with the NEA, NASAA hosted the **Hearts of Practice convening** in February in Washington, D.C. The event was the culmination of a year-long **Arts and Health Professional Learning Community** focused on strengthening the knowledge and practices of SAA and RAO staff working at the intersection of arts and health. The convening brought together representatives from 30 SAAs, all six RAOs, the NEA and leaders in the arts and health field to network, learn and discuss key trends and issues affecting NASAA members.
- ▲ A new arts and health brief, **Evidence for the Arts Strengthening Health Outcomes**, was released early this year. Along with the companion **arts and health infographic**, it outlines research demonstrating that the arts offer innovative solutions to existing and new health challenges. These resources are specifically designed to support the leadership of state arts agencies in the arts and health sphere.
- ▲ NASAA's **FY2026 State Arts Agency Revenues report** provides detailed tables and comprehensive analyses of state arts agency funding trends within broader national trends. Included in the new release is a series of **interactive dashboards** for exploring revenue data. SAAs can use this data to help make informed advocacy arguments, understand trends, and benchmark themselves nationally.
- ▲ In February, NASAA released updated **grant making facts** on arts education, general operating support, individual artists, local arts agencies and rural communities. These resources offer an in-depth look at how SAAs invest public dollars to strengthen arts ecosystems nationwide.
- ▲ NASAA has delivered in-depth **technical assistance** to numerous SAAs. Recent customized research projects include a comprehensive grants analysis for Delaware, a strategic planning survey for Iowa and a survey analysis for Arizona. NASAA also developed and delivered customized trainings for council members and constituents in North Carolina, Utah and Vermont.
- ▲ NASAA's **Learning Series** offers ongoing virtual professional development opportunities focused on the evolving needs of state arts agencies. Recent topics have included accessibility, the creative economy, America 250, strategic planning and cross-sector collaboration. These sessions emphasize peer-to-peer learning and share practical tools, research and real-world examples.



## GOAL 3: CONNECT STATE ARTS AGENCIES.

- ▲ The [NASAA 2025 Executive Forum](#) took place in Omaha, Nebraska, November 11-13. This small gathering for SAA executive and deputy/assistant directors provided the opportunity for in-depth, professionally facilitated dialogue about the most pressing issues facing state arts agencies. The meeting was designed as a collaborative learning experience, with executive and deputy directors providing input to the agenda.



Photo courtesy of Omaha Tourism

- ▲ To support the success of newly appointed leaders, NASAA convened a **New Executive Directors Roundtable** tailored to their needs. Held in advance of the 2025 Executive Forum, the gathering provided an opportunity for participants to connect as a cohort and deepen their understanding of state arts agencies, change leadership, state policy, strategic partnerships and other issues of key importance for recent appointees.
- ▲ **NASAA's ongoing communications** help members understand and respond to developments. In addition to [federal updates](#), NASAA initiates communications and responds to questions via our listservs, tailoring information to the concerns of job-alike groups.
- ▲ NASAA continues to actively support **job-alike peer groups** by creating more frequent and varied opportunities for connection. For instance, in February, a joint session brought together grants officers and deputies to engage directly with the NEA on questions related to federal reporting and compliance. In March, the Community Development Coordinators Peer Group invited all peer group members to a special cross-peer group session featuring a presentation on accessible art and placemaking.
- ▲ Planning is underway for **NASAA Assembly 2026**, taking place in Washington, D.C., this October. SAA staff and council members from across the country will gather to reflect, exchange ideas and look ahead during this special convening in America's 250th year, hosted by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The program will focus on the evolving role of public arts agencies in strengthening cultural policy, civic life and creative expression in American communities.



- ▲ **Members are actively involved in NASAA's work** via the Audit, Governance, Nominating, and Planning & Budget committees, as well as the 2026 Dues Task Force. All NASAA board meetings are open to SAA and RAO executive directors and include updates from the field.

## GOAL 4: BUILD NASAA'S CAPACITY.

- ▲ In December, NASAA launched our **Philanthropy Affiliates Program**. This initiative offers private arts grant makers the opportunity to benefit from NASAA's services, research and publications. The program has resulted in \$95,000 in funding to date.
- ▲ In 2025 (January 1 - December 31), NASAA raised \$78,463 from 124 **individual donors**. Gifts ranged from \$10 to \$25,500.
- ▲ To intentionally foster connections among NASAA's hybrid and geographically dispersed workforce and strengthen our teamwork, planning is underway to convene a **staff retreat** in June.
- ▲ NASAA is preparing to welcome a **new communications staff member** later this spring. We are grateful to Senior Communications Manager Sue Struve for her years of dedicated service, and for assisting in a smooth staff transition.
- ▲ NASAA is **redeveloping our website** for improved functionality and stability. We look forward to launching the new site in the coming months.
- ▲ NASAA's **independent financial audit** for FY2025 resulted in a positive report, with no findings related to internal controls or key compliance functions. Although NASAA consistently achieves clean audits, maintaining such a high standard of financial oversight is a significant achievement for any nonprofit organization.

