Organized around NASAA’s strategic plan, this report highlights key accomplishments from NASAA’s 2022 membership year (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022). Activities addressing top priorities from our Fiscal Year 2022 Action Plan are noted throughout.

**GOAL 1: ADVOCATE FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES.**

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

- NASAA advocated with key U.S. House and Senate committees overseeing the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) budget. We emphasized the impact of NEA funding and the crucial role played by the **40% of NEA grant funds administered by states and regions**. Strong state relationships and coalition advocacy efforts ultimately led Congress to appropriate $180 million to the NEA for FY2022, an **increase of $12.5 million** over FY2021 funding levels. This appropriation marks the seventh consecutive year of enacted increases for the agency and the largest percentage increase in more than a decade, signaling a strong vote of bipartisan confidence.

- NASAA equipped state and regional arts advocates with **data and talking points** to use to **advocate for increased funding for the NEA in FY2023**. The House and Senate both are **recommending increases**.

- Looking ahead to changes in committee leadership after the midterm elections, NASAA **initiated targeted outreach to key appropriators** who are poised to influence deliberations about future NEA funding. We identified connections to those individuals and organized contacts to reinforce NASAA’s **key advocacy messages**.

### 2022 Priority ADVOCACY

In addition to targeted federal advocacy, NASAA supported state efforts to enact relief funding and communicate the importance of the arts. NASAA:

- secured increased funding for the NEA
- advocated for inclusion of the arts in federal economic assistance for small businesses
- consulted with the Creative States Coalition advocacy network
- equipped arts advocates with NASAA’s messaging research to communicate across the political spectrum
- helped state arts agencies hone their rationale for state relief and recovery funding
- analyzed state legislation affecting the arts
- led advocacy briefing or training sessions at multiple state events
- issued timely alerts on federal arts policy developments
NASAA greeted Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson as the new NEA chair. We coordinated welcome messages and facilitated a forum to introduce Dr. Jackson to states and regions and initiate dialogue about opportunities and challenges facing the arts.

NASAA works with numerous federal advocacy allies to grow resources for the NEA and participate in coalition advocacy efforts. We were active in the Cultural Advocacy Group, met regularly with Americans for the Arts, and served as a resource for the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color)-led Arts Advocacy Coalition, Arts Workers United, Be an Arts Hero, the Performing Arts Alliance and others.

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

Many states and jurisdictions are in the process of allocating their American Rescue Plan (ARP) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. NASAA helped members seize these opportunities to dedicate additional relief resources to the arts. NASAA tracked ARP funds, helped members craft rationales for use with legislatures and governors, shared sample guidelines, and served as a clearinghouse for questions.

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business held its first-ever hearing on the creative economy. NASAA testified on the importance of the creative sector to U.S. productivity and the catalytic role the arts can play in sparking economic recovery.

NASAA collaborated with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a webinar illustrating how to tap into HUD’s Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program for creative placemaking initiatives. Featuring a case study from Crosstown Concourse in Memphis, the session shared partnership and financing strategies that center the arts in community revitalization efforts. NASAA’s Creative Placemaking Public Resources Guide was updated in conjunction with the event.

C. Strengthen state level advocacy practices.

NASAA increased our communications with state arts advocacy organizations. We met regularly with the Creative States Coalition and responded to numerous requests from citizens’ groups seeking information or advocacy consultations. We distributed funding data, policy alerts, and advocacy tools and invited these organizations to participate in NASAA’s policy related briefing sessions and online events.

NASAA helped advocates apply lessons learned from our advocacy messaging research. Arts and Creativity Strengthen Our Nation: A Narrative and Message Guide uses framing science to garner
support across the political spectrum. In addition to promoting the guide, NASAA provided custom presentations advising states on ways to adapt the messaging principles to their own work.

- NASAA was invited to speak at state level advocacy events in Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee. NASAA provided a national context, shared relevant research and helped advocates craft a compelling case for support.

- Our state legislative tracking system pinpointed bills affecting state arts agencies and their constituents. NASA monitored emerging legislation and synthesized the trends in the 2021 edition of our State Legislative Roundup, and a 2022 edition is being prepared. NASAA also tracked budget analyses and governors’ proposed budgets for state arts agencies for FY2023.

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

- NASAA cooperated with the National League of Cities (NLC) on a new project to promote the role of the arts in community health and well-being. As a complement to the Improving Community Health and Resilience through the Arts initiative, NASAA and NLC identified examples of states, cities and rural towns (in Colorado, Rhode Island and Vermont) that are harnessing the arts to promote improved public health and community cohesion.

- NASAA plays a leadership role in the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), operated by the Education Commission of the States. NASAA facilitated AEP's Equity Working Group, a learning community of education organizations, arts service associations and state arts agencies.

- NASAA intersects with Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) in multiple ways. Our president and CEO, Pam Breaux, serves on GIA's board; NASAA participated in GIA webinars on advocacy and funding trends; and we advised GIA on its Cultural Policy Action Lab. NASAA led a session on Equitable Economic Recovery through the Arts at the Plurality, Power and Belonging convening.

- NASAA collaborated with the National Conference of State Legislatures to elevate the arts as an asset to economic recovery. The arts were featured in State Legislatures Magazine (on page 20). “Embracing the Arts," indicates support for the arts on both sides of the political aisle and asserts, “States are recognizing that arts and culture enhance quality of life, attracting tourists and workers and bolstering their economies over the long haul.”

- NASAA met with the staff and board of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. We exchanged strategies for federal advocacy, advancing equity, member relations and other topics of mutual interest.
GOAL 2: HONE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES.

A. Supply authoritative facts about state arts agencies.

- NASAA maintains comprehensive information on state arts agency grant making. Using the latest Final Descriptive Report data, NASAA generated maps and statistical analyses showing the reach and impact of more than 20,000 awards. We completed a major makeover of our Grant Making web page and topical fact sheets on funds for arts education, operating support, rural communities, individual artists and local arts agencies.

- NASAA’s State Arts Agency Revenues, Fiscal Year 2022 report summarized state arts agency budgets, including appropriations, state rankings, line items and trends over time. The FY2023 State Arts Agency Legislative Appropriations Preview offered a forecast for the subsequent fiscal year. Our interactive Raise Your Ranking tool and the Legislative Appropriations Explorer, Total Agency Revenue Explorer and a Regional Appropriations and Revenue Explorer contain comparative data in engaging formats.

- NASAA provided comprehensive information on state arts agency staffing and compensation to assist members with agency restructuring, professional advancement and leadership transitions. A new survey launched in summer 2022.

B. Catalyze state arts agency innovation, improvement and change.

- State to State, a monthly column in the NASAA Notes newsletter, profiled innovative initiatives from 33 state arts agencies. COVID-19 pandemic responses and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs were recurring features. We showcased unique programs such as arts education partnerships in Idaho and Indiana; the People’s Markets in Kansas; Maryland’s Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Project; Delaware’s Arts Equity Innovation Incubator; rural arts initiatives in Oklahoma and Tennessee; arts reopening campaigns in Iowa, North Carolina and New Jersey; and artist workforce strategies from California and Colorado. More than 460 exciting models from all 56 states and jurisdictions are now available in the searchable State to State Article Archive.

- Our creative aging partnership with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy, Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging, continues. This multiyear initiative helps state arts agencies improve well-being, lifelong learning and social engagement for older adults. NASAA
awarded $1.46 million in grants to 36 state arts agencies. A second professional development institute is planned for November 2022.

- In collaboration with WolfBrown, NASAA completed an arts funding ecosystem analysis for the California Arts Council. Part of a larger evaluation effort designed to review California’s funding systems through a race equity lens, NASAA’s analysis mined a variety of data sources to identify BIPOC organizations across the state and analyze patterns of public and private support.

- NASAA completed the Equity GAP Project in collaboration with the Ohio Arts Council. This pilot project demonstrated how a state arts agency can assess—and ultimately reduce—obstacles to public funding experienced by rural, BIPOC, disabled and low-income communities. The assessment included a robust combination of policy review, constituent outreach, staff consultation, data analysis and benchmarking.

- NASAA hosted an Equitable Operating Support Jam Session to help state arts agencies exchange strategies for reducing barriers to public funding.

- NASAA participated in the National Coalition for Arts’ Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER) steering committee to support states and jurisdictions affected by disasters and to circulate best practices in readiness, recovery and resilience.

### 2022 Priority

**EQUITY**

NASAA provided a wide array of member services to help state arts agencies advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). These activities—encompassing research, professional development and governance activities—are integrated across all four of NASAA’s strategic goals and align with our DEI policy.

- Convened regular conference calls with our People of Color Affinity Group and our accessibility network
- Launched the second cohort of our DEI Mentorship Program for state arts agency people of color
- Completed a comprehensive anti-bias training program for state arts agency staff and councils
- Promoted our Visualizing Equity in Grant Making service suite as well as our Rural Equity, Economic Equity and Race Equity benchmarks
- Prepared an ecosystem analysis of funding for BIPOC organizations in California
- Completed the Ohio Equity GAP Project assessment
- Promoted DEI models and equity resources in every edition of NASAA Notes
- Conducted extensive internal training on unconscious bias and inclusive facilitation

### C. Facilitate members’ use of information for planning, decision making and case making.

- NASAA fulfilled an estimated 450 information requests in FY2022. Popular topics included advocacy, federal reporting and DEI. Most inquiries came from members. Nonmembers (including the NEA, advocacy groups, consultants and scholars) also requested information.
The Creative Economy State Profiles put the latest data on the economic impact of the creative sector at members’ fingertips. Produced in cooperation with the NEA, this interactive dashboard offers U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data on arts jobs and the size of the sector in 2020. Updates to the Interactive Database of State Creative Economy Studies provide more information on individual states’ creative industries.

NASA provided technical assistance to 17 member agencies and RAOs. We facilitated council deliberations, led virtual conference workshops and conducted custom research to inform planning and policy development.

We promoted a robust suite of equity analysis tools: Visualizing Equity in Grant Making. These dashboards—delivered through customized demonstrations—help state arts agencies understand which demographic cohorts their funds are reaching.

In cooperation with the NEA, NASAA completed a survey of state and regional uses of NEA Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funds, compiling available information on job creation/retention, facilities spending and the impact of funds. Based on what was learned through that survey, NASAA also advised states and regions on data it would be useful to track for their American Rescue Plan subgrants.

NASA supported states and regions as they navigated the transition to a new unique entity identifier system for all subgrantees. NASAA requested instructions from the NEA about this new federal requirement, convened an SAA working group and circulated relevant guidance.

In cooperation with the NEA, NASAA is undertaking a variety of research activities designed to inform future data collection practices at the federal and state levels. We completed a comparison of reporting requirements between NEA direct grants and Partnership Agreement recipients and reported on the uses of beneficiary data. We also analyzed information about the data states and regions collect for their own purposes, beyond federal reporting requirements.

Thoughtful curation of new research relevant to state arts agencies is one of NASAA’s trademark services. We shared useful research on equity and demographics, how arts organizations are adapting to the pandemic, and program evaluation practices, to name a few topics of note. Our monthly column, The Research Digest, synthesizes both NASAA information and a select mixture of material harvested from other organizations within and beyond the arts field.
D. Deliver educational programs that boost members’ knowledge and leadership skills.

- NASAA offered an ambitious suite of **virtual professional development programs** for state arts agencies. The [NASAA 2021 Learning Series](#) offered sessions on advocacy, reopening, recovery, equity, resilience and more. The [NASAA 2022 Learning Series](#) featured sessions on BIPOC arts leadership, debunking rural stereotypes and arts education partnerships, among other topics. An intensive [anti-bias training program](#) shared fundamental concepts members can apply toward inclusive workplaces and interactions.

- Multiple professional development offerings in the **arts education** realm took place in 2022. In the spring, NASAA completed a two-part webinar on effective strategies for engaging teaching artists, building off of the [strategy sampler](#) completed in 2021. States from the mid-Atlantic region engaged NASAA to manage a virtual Mid-Atlantic Teaching Artist Retreat in August. The 2022 Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute took place in cooperation with the NEA in Kansas City.

- In cooperation with the NEA and the American Folklore Society (AFS), NASAA is managing a growing suite of technical assistance and learning programs for state arts agency **folk and traditional arts program managers**. AFS produced the 2022 inaugural Folk Arts Professional Development Institute for state arts agencies, launching new programs with federal support. The online series of seven workshops included sessions on program design, fieldwork, equitable grant making and archiving. A two-day preconference took place in conjunction with NASAA Assembly 2022.

- The [NASAA Leadership Awards](#) recognize exemplary service and showcase best practices. The 2022 DEI Agency Award recognized an SAA or RAO that has demonstrated exceptional efforts to be diverse, equitable and inclusive. The DEI Individual Award celebrated an individual who demonstrates outstanding leadership and commitment to embodying DEI values in their work. The Luminary Award for Transformative Executive Leadership recognized an outstanding executive director, and the Distinguished Public Service Award honored a volunteer leader.

**GOAL 3: CONNECT STATE ARTS AGENCIES.**

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

- Monthly issues of the [NASAA Notes](#) newsletter shared updates and resource alerts useful to state arts agencies, state arts advocacy organizations and allies.
NASAA issued Report to Councils in December, May and September. This publication highlights recent NASAA activities and serves as a handy insert in council meeting materials. The For Council Members web page gives appointed state arts agency leaders streamlined access to NASAA resources.

NASAA’s social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) promote the good work of our members and share news within—and beyond—the state arts agency community. Our website serves as a hub of information for and about state arts agencies.

NASAA will soon be sporting a fresh new visual identity! We worked with a designer to develop a new logo and style guide for digital, social and print communications. We're excited to implement the new look.

B. Facilitate peer-to-peer networking.

- Most job-alike peer groups continued to meet quarterly in 2022.
- NASAA sustained our People of Color Affinity Group to provide a supportive and empowering forum for people of color in the state arts agency staff and council network.
- We launched the second cohort of NASAA’s DEI Mentorship Program. This leadership development effort supports individual members of color as they enter, sustain and advance their careers in state arts agencies.
- NASAA maintained listservs to facilitate networking and problem solving for executive directors, deputies, accessibility coordinators, public information officers, grants officers, arts education managers, community development managers, folk and traditional arts program managers and the People of Color Affinity Group. We launched a new listserv for state arts agency gallery managers, as well.
- NASAA offers mindfulness meditation sessions via conference call several times a week. These sessions bring members together informally to develop a shared practice that supports leadership, connectedness and well-being.

C. Promote the understanding and use of NASAA services.

- Nine new executive directors joined our network this year. Each new appointee received a one-on-one onboarding consultation with NASAA, customized follow-up support on priority issues, a
resource packet and an introduction to the field in NASAA Notes. Because our usual Boot Camp plans were disrupted by the pandemic, NASAA convened newly appointed executives from 19 states for a special cohort meeting in conjunction with Assembly 2022.

- NASAA produced member benefit summaries for all state arts agencies undergoing leadership transitions. Each sheet is tailored to describe the knowledge, representation and community benefits the state arts agency receives through its NASAA membership.

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

- The Development Committee examined NASAA's board contribution practices and relayed feedback to the Governance Committee. The Development Committee also completed a thankathon phone tree and planned NASAA's individual giving campaigns.

- The Governance Committee recommended changes to NASAA's policy on board contributions. To advance equity, a new policy eliminates expectations of monetary contributions as a condition of NASAA board service. The committee also drafted a demographic survey for NASAA board members and considered the skills and attributes needed for new board nominees for 2023.

- The Planning and Budget Committee led a process to update NASAA's strategic plan. The entire membership was invited to weigh in on the revised document, which addresses significant shifts in the state arts agency environment.

- Nominating Committee members conducted interviews with all state arts agency executive directors and council chairs. This outreach informed the slate for NASAA's 2023 board of directors, gauged member satisfaction and provided guidance for NASAA's next action plan.

- The Awards Task Force oversaw NASAA's national recognition awards for 2022 and refreshed the criteria and nominations systems.

- Because NASAA's current five-year dues plan sunsets at the end of FY2023, a Dues Task Force was convened to prepare a new dues plan for FY2024 and beyond. States and jurisdictions provided feedback to inform the new plan prior to it being presented for a membership vote.

- The Audit Committee supervised NASAA's annual audit and IRS Form 990 reporting.

**GOAL 4: BUILD NASAA'S CAPACITY.**

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

- NASAA continues to cultivate foundation partnerships. We received support from E.A. Michelson Philanthropy (formerly Aroha Philanthropies) for our creative aging collaboration and secured support for the Assembly from the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation.
In 2021 (January 1 – December 31), NASAA raised $148,884 from individual donors, thanks in part to a highly successful year-end matching campaign. Gifts ranged from $10 to $25,000. Two hundred people made a gift to NASAA in 2021.

NASAA received a Partnership grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. We continued to draw on an NEA American Rescue Plan grant and secured an increase in cooperative agreement funding for research services and for professional development services for folk and traditional arts program managers.

B. Develop NASAA's human resources.

The NASAA staff is increasing our internal fluency around equity issues, to strengthen our member services and our organizational culture. We completed a five-part anti-bias training program with Team Dynamics. The training built a shared vocabulary for our team and raised awareness of how identity affects the workplace and colleague interactions. NASAA’s senior leadership team is receiving supplementary training on managing conflict and microaggressions. Through a facilitation training course with Artistic Logistics, the whole staff received introductions to emotional intelligence and somatic justice as important aspects of designing group interactions. Staff continues to self-organize anti-racism discussions.

In addition to group trainings, NASAA continued to encourage individual professional development opportunities. Resources allowing, our goal is for every staff member to receive training specific to their job responsibilities at least once every other year.

We expanded our employee benefits to include health care and dependent care flexible spending accounts and a modest reimbursement for remote work costs.

C. Improve NASAA's operations and technology.

NASAA reopened our physical office in phases. Most staff are electing to work remotely, but we are adapting our space and protocols to support on-site work as desired. Efforts are underway to downsize our office space to conserve resources for FY2023 and beyond.

Our spring board meeting was conducted using a hybrid meeting model. We put a vaccine verification system in place to contribute to the safety of both meeting participants and the host venue.
To support more robust and efficient **database functions** we implemented new solutions for event registrations and bulk email.

- NASAA selected a **new IT support firm**. In addition to providing improved responsiveness, the new firm is conducting a thorough assessment of NASAA’s technology needs in order to help NASAA plan for future upgrades. Several hardware and security improvements were put in place to facilitate better access for remote workers.

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

- After a thorough RFP process, NASAA selected Team Dynamics to conduct our **organizational equity audit**. This multiyear effort, commencing in 2022, will thoroughly examine NASAA’s governance, operations, programs and communications and will result in an action plan to advance equity at NASAA.

- We completed an **independent financial audit** for FY2021. NASAA’s internal controls and key processes were deemed effective and no recommendations for change were offered. Annual audits allow NASAA to continually deepen our understanding of best practices in accountability and financial management.

- NASAA conducted our annual **employee satisfaction survey** and used the results to inform our management strategies. The numbers indicate an increase in staff satisfaction levels compared to prior years.

- Staff mined Nominating Committee **interview results** to better understand member needs and **member satisfaction**. We paid particular attention to constructive criticism and requests for additional assistance.

- We issued our annual **performance metrics report**, tracking **15 indicators** of organizational “fitness” for NASAA as a professional association.

- NASAA evaluated the 2021 virtual learning series and our internal staff trainings. Ratings and participant comments are being used to design future learning programs.

- NASAA analyzed **communications data** relating to our website usage, social media engagement and bulk email messaging. We draw on these resources to inform content delivery and make adjustments to our communications tactics.