

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities

### August 2021 Update

NASAA updates and publishes its diversity, equity and inclusion activities list annually to provide transparency about efforts to advance this critical work. In direct response to member needs and [NASAA's Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) (DEI), our efforts span the breadth of NASAA's programmatic, policy and management portfolios.

This document is comprised of three components: (1) fiscal year 2021 DEI activities, (2) plans for FY2022 and (3) an archive of activities undertaken from FY2016 through FY2020. FY2021 activities are categorized as follows:

- Empower State Arts Agencies to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Achieve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within NASAA's Governance and Management Portfolios
- Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Strategic Partnerships

### FY2021

#### a. Empower State Arts Agencies to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- a** Promoted [policies and programs state arts agencies \(SAAs\) have used to advance DEI](#) at the state level. Some examples included Pennsylvania's new [operating support guidelines](#), Florida's [grant-making task force](#), the [BIPOC Youth Alumni Council](#) and [Culture Rx](#) initiatives in Massachusetts, Wyoming's [Native Art Fellowship](#), the [Sogelau Monument Project](#) in American Samoa, preservation of [ancestral CHamoru traditions](#) in Guam, and many others.

- a** **Convened SAAs, regional arts organizations (RAO), territories and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** to pool ideas for the equitable distribution of federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding.

- a** Implemented the **Creative Placemaking Convocation** for the SAA community development coordinators which was specifically designed to incorporate DEI values in content and speaker/artist representation.

**a** Designed and implemented the 2021 Learning Series with a focus on infusing sessions with diverse speakers and topic areas that are relevant for SAA DEI work.

**a** Developed a request for proposals, selected a trainer and began work on designing a series of anti-bias trainings for membership to take place in fall 2021.

**a** Participated in a virtual group discussion of advisors to review Mass Cultural Council's first-ever Racial Equity Plan, which will guide all future agency planning and policy decisions.

**a** The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group met biannually to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education. A current focus of conversation is how to ensure that state arts agency grant-making practices and policies in arts education are as equitable as possible for all constituents.

**a** The State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute (PDI) continues to explore inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on increasing and sustaining equity in arts education, post pandemic. PDI convenings will place in September and October 2021.

**a** Answered 53-member **information requests about DEI** (partial-year data October 2020-April 2021). Topics ranged from grant-making strategies focusing on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and/or people of color) and rural groups to reducing bias in panel adjudication to strategies for engaging boards in DEI efforts.

**a** Supported the efforts of the SAA People of Color Affinity Group. This year the staff supported leadership from the field and conducted planning for quarterly group convenings. The affinity group leadership consists of cochairs and an advisor representing SAA staff and council members.

**a** Shared **DEI research, program models and equity resources from outside of the SAA sector** in every edition of the NASAA Notes newsletter. Examples included [Centering the Picture: The Role of Race & Ethnicity in Cultural Engagement in the U.S.](#), [Buffering against Uncertainty: Working Capital and the Resiliency of BIPOC-Serving Organizations](#), [Accessibility and the Arts: Reconsidering the Role of the Artist](#) and [Bridging Divides, Creating Community: Arts, Culture and Immigration](#), among others.

**a** Analyzed **populations-benefiting data** related to race, age and distinct groups for all available data to understand data gaps and reporting trends for all SAAs and RAOs.

**a** Promoted the [Visualizing Equity in Grant Making](#) service. This service uses dynamic data dashboards—delivered through customized online demonstrations to 23 SAAs—to help members understand which demographic cohorts their funds are reaching.

**a** Conducted research on **equity audit models for grant making**. NASAA interviewed five SAAs that have conducted such assessments and also secured examples of audit reports from private grant makers and other public agencies. The resulting information will be used to inform the Equitable Grantmaking Assessment Pilot Project in FY2022, to demonstrate how SAAs might approach audits of their funding policies and practices.

**a** Improved practices in designing for accessibility within NASAA's data visualization work and delivered **ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant maps** for the NEA to describe NEA and SAA activities in each state.

**a** Secured Team Dynamics as our consulting partner for a comprehensive **anti-bias training program** that will be offered to state arts agencies October-December 2021.

**a** Prepared a new **federal policy plank** ([Strengthening America through Arts and Creativity: A 2021 Federal Policy Agenda](#)) urging elected officials to revive

America's economy through the arts and tap the nation's creative assets to achieve greater equity and facilitate community healing.

**a** Compiled information on **state legislation pertaining to critical race theory** and bills that may affect SAAs' ability to conduct DEI training. [Tracked and reported other legislation](#) relevant to SAAs' DEI policies and programs.

**a** Led collective impact efforts to integrate DEI into **arts education policies and practices**. Examples include chairing the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group; convening the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion + Access Committee of SAA arts education managers; and providing [professional development](#) to help SAAs develop accessible and culturally responsive arts learning programs.

**a** Integrated timely equity topics into **2021 Learning Series sessions**: new paradigms for BIPOC artist support (August 2021) and strategies for making operating support grant funding more accessible for organizations rooted in BIPOC, rural and other underserved communities (September 2021). The series also featured a diverse roster of experts and artists addressing other topics.

**a** Updated and expanded NASAA's **DEI Consultant Sourcebook**. (August release)

**a** Collaborated with ArtsWA to **conduct research on strategies SAAs are using to integrate equity into their strategic planning, policies and programming**. This work included preparing in-depth case studies of four states, convening a roundtable on strategies for advancing equity in state public art programs, and convening a roundtable on best practices for deepening SAA relationships with diverse communities. Reports will be released to the membership in September.

**a** Served as a consultant for WolfBrown in the evaluation of California Arts Council Programs, specifically conducting a landscape analysis to determine **how public and private funders reach BIPOC arts organizations** across the state of California.

**a** NASAA staff worked with the SAA community development network cochairs to design a two-day retreat that infused DEI issues into their agenda, particularly with regards to climate change, rural equity and cultural district work.

**a** Periodically updated the [Inclusive Language Guide](#) and the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources](#) web page.

## **b. Achieve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within NASAA's Governance and Management Portfolios**

**b** Continued **monthly staff anti-racism lunch meetings** to discuss current DEI issues.

**b** The NASAA **board of directors** continued to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including a DEI segment as a meeting agenda item.

**b** The **Governance Committee** continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2021 activities included a review of NASAA's board composition/current attributes needed guide and an expansive review of NASAA's DEI agenda/activities.

**b** Continued to embed diversity, equity and inclusion questions into all of our Nominating Committee interviews and action planning conversations, ensuring that a broad spectrum of DEI factors informs NASAA's governance, programming and operations.

**b** NASAA's 2021 **Nominating Committee** prioritized identifying diverse candidates for the NASAA board, specifically people of color, people under 50 and executive directors. ASAA's board nomination process was recently revised to reduce barriers to participation, so that application forms are simplified and nominators commit to writing statements of support for prospective candidates.

**b** Increased NASAA's inclusion of images of historically disenfranchised groups on the website, in communications and on social media.

**b** Operations staff participated in various workshops, including ArtEquity's Finding the Keys, Antiracist Approaches to Radical Recruitment in the Arts; NonprofitHR's Keys to Integrating DEI: Transparency, Power-Sharing and Accountability; and monthly DEI Corners hosted by the HR Roundtable.

**b** Improved NASAA's recruitment practices to encourage diversity in engaging contractors and vendors.

**b** Improved NASAA's recruitment practices to encourage more diverse hiring pools.

**b** Secured Team Dynamics to facilitate a comprehensive anti-bias training program for NASAA staff.

**b** Hired Esor Consulting as NASAA's third-party Salesforce vendor. Esor partners with HBCUforce, a nonprofit organization that works with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to implement programs that provide early access to cloud computing careers.

### **c. Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Strategic Partnerships**

**c** Collaborated with U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD), the NEA and DAISA Enterprises to present **Rural Placemaking at the Intersection of Arts, Agriculture and Economic Development**. This briefing oriented USDA-RD field offices to the work of SAAs and elevated the arts as a strategy for promoting sustainable rural development.

**c** Compiled and shared with the NEA a variety of strategies used by state arts agencies to **diversify their distribution of state and federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act relief** funding.

**c** Supplied feedback on the **National Endowment for the Arts strategic plan**, emphasizing the opportunity to provide federal leadership for equity efforts in the arts field.

**c** Canvassed SAAs and RAOs on strategies they use to **recruit new grant applicants and extend funding to groups historically excluded from public support**. Prepared a briefing paper for the NEA highlighting examples from 27 SAAs and RAOs.

**c** Coordinated **SAA grants officer** sessions with guest speakers addressing DEI issues. Speakers included: Jimmy Castillo from the Houston Arts Alliance to discuss the [City of Houston's Civic Art Collection Equity Review](#); David Holland from WESTAF to discuss the [Regional Arts Resilience Program](#) and how it was adapted to better serve BIPOC and rural communities; and Dana Parsons from the Maryland State Arts Council to present the training that Maryland conducts on intrinsic bias for all grant panelists.

**c** Conducted **presentations and workshops** designed to help the boards of members and allies to integrate DEI into their policies, governance and advocacy practices. This included sessions with SAAs (New Hampshire, Chicago, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Nebraska and Oklahoma), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, CultureSource, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, the Federation of State Humanities Councils and other groups.

**c** In collaboration with Aroha Philanthropies, NASAA announced the award of \$1,457,000 in grant funding to 36 state and jurisdictional arts agencies. As part of NASAA's [Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging](#) initiative, these grants strengthen the ability of SAAs to address the needs of older adults, a growing population that is highly vulnerable to discrimination, poor health, isolation and poverty. The grants also expand opportunities for creative aging across the nation, facilitating lifelong learning, joy, social engagement and improved well-being for older adults. In July 2021, NASAA produced the inaugural **Creative Aging Institute**, which explored the intersectionality of aging and ageism with other forms of social discrimination based on ability, race, geographical location and more.

**c** Cooperated with the NEA to provide racial equity training for state arts agency **folk and traditional arts** coordinators.

**c** NASAA staff participated in the **Sustaining and Advancing Indigenous Cultures Native Artists Summit**. The summit was designed to establish a sustainable structure for helping tribal communities, cultural facilities, educational institutions, funders and others to improve support for Native artists.

**c** Worked in partnership with the NEA to craft a multiday online SAA Accessibility Coordinators Peer Group convening focused on best practices and diversity.

**c** NASAA chairs the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) Equity Working Group. The group is a professional community that gathers to support ongoing learning and dialogue related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.

**c** NASAA began its deep focus on DEI in fall 2015. The work broadly includes all realms of human difference, as well as a focus on race equity. As of October 2021, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color on NASAA's board and staff:

- In October 2015, **10%** of the NASAA board was made up of people of color. As of September 2021, **52%** of the FY2021 NASAA board is comprised of people of color.
- In October 2015, **16%** of the NASAA staff was made up of people of color. To date, **35%** of the NASAA staff are people of color.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities in NASAA's FY2022 Action Plan**

NASAA's Draft FY2022 action plan identifies four key priorities that will guide our work in the year ahead. One of them is equity:

*NASAA will equip state arts agencies to navigate the policy and practice—and politics—of equity. Through models, training and leadership by example, NASAA will help state arts agencies reduce individual and institutional biases*



*and make the arts more accessible to all. These activities are integrated across all four of NASAA's goals and propel our Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.*

Specific activities and actions are summarized below, within NASAA's four goal areas. Note that these are in draft form, pending final review and revision by NASAA's management team, the Planning & Budget Committee and the NASAA board.

**FY22 GOAL I. ADVOCATE FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES.**

Participate in inclusive federal coalition advocacy efforts, including the Cultural Advocacy Group.

Through the Education Commission of the States and the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), encourage the adoption of state policies and practices that strengthen arts learning. Chair the AEP Equity Working Group to embed diversity, equity and inclusion practices into the work of AEP and its partners.

**FY22 GOAL II. HONE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES.**

Secure fresh information on state arts agency compensation, staffing and agency demographics. Provide benchmarking services and trend overviews to help state arts agencies make the case for more human resources.

Harness the power of research to advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) among state arts agencies:

- Enhance the Visualizing Equity in Grant Making service to incorporate new geographic detail, improved product packaging and public-facing versions of the data (at the direction of member states)
- Launch the Equitable Grantmaking Assessment Pilot Project (a.k.a. the Equity GAP Project) to demonstrate how state arts agencies can evaluate the practices, policies and procedures used to distribute grant funds [Activity contingent upon securing outside support.]
- Share models of DEI programs, tools and research adopted by state arts agencies and other networks
- Provide examples and guidance for strategies state arts agencies can use to engage tribal communities

Showcase state arts agencies' program and policy ingenuity as well as exemplary practices through [NASAA Notes newsletter column] State to State and special reports. Priority will be placed on strategic adaptations in the wake of COVID-19, including:

- Grant programs and services that advance DEI
- Models for responsive operating support
- Models for supporting individual artists

Collect and circulate examples of state arts agency DEI plans and related metrics or benchmarks, to inform state arts agency DEI action planning.

Assess reporting data that state arts agencies currently are collecting from their grantees, including demographic information relevant to measuring equity progress. Collaborate with state arts agencies to relay state and regional input into future federal reporting requirements.

Plan, promote and present an engaging Assembly 2022 conference in Kansas City, Missouri. Provide learning and networking opportunities relevant to state arts agency staff and council members. Priority agenda topics will include DEI, post pandemic recovery and advocacy.

Deliver anti-bias training sessions tailored for state arts agency executive staff, general staff and council members. These sessions will address fundamental skills for avoiding unconscious bias plus practical tips for reducing bias in the everyday work of state arts agencies.

Provide educational programming to help state arts agencies recognize how structural racism can affect government systems within which state arts agencies operate. Collaborate with experts on government operations and equity work to design and deliver these trainings.

Convene a second virtual Creative Aging Institute (CAI) for all state arts agencies and their creative aging partners. With the support of Aroha Philanthropies, this professional development event deepens knowledge of creative aging and prepares participants to combat ageism and ableism and to be effective creative aging champions.

FY22

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

Cultivate a state arts agency community of practice around DEI:

- Sustain an affinity group for state arts agency staff and council members of color;
- Support a listserv and online resource hub for the People of Color Affinity Group;
- Convene Equity Strategy Think Tanks to harvest insights about specific equity challenges, such as addressing constituent pushback or making a case for more diverse council appointments;

- Convene executive and deputy directors for joint leadership development training that focuses on organizational development, staffing and internal conflicts arising around DEI;
- Elevate DEI leadership in the state arts agency field by presenting NASAA's DEI awards;
- Restart a mentorship program for state arts agency 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 state arts agency peer groups. (Specific activities are planned for folk/traditional arts managers, arts education managers and community development coordinators.)

Establish a Red State Caucus to serve as an affinity group for convening state arts agency leaders operating in conservative political environments. Facilitate dialogue on issues such as advocacy positioning strategies, framing equity work, cultivating conservative arts champions, and other topics of timely interest to caucus members. Establish a link between the caucus and the NASAA board of directors.

#### **FY22 GOAL IV. BUILD NASAA'S CAPACITY.**

Embody NASAA's diversity, equity and inclusion principles in our recruitment practices and organizational culture. Specific activities in 2022 will include:

- Conducting an equity audit of NASAA's internal policies and practices
- Revising job descriptions, performance standards and performance reviews to include DEI objectives

## **NASAA FY2016-2020 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities**

### **FY2016**

- NASAA board of directors and new CEO discussed diversity, equity and inclusion; this conversation, which occurred in a board meeting open to members during the Leadership Institute, launched NASAA's efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Inclusive Leadership session was held at the Salt Lake City, Utah, Leadership Institute. The session explored how SAAs can address the needs of changing communities through policies and practice.

- NASAA published an info guide to inform SAA members about our work to advance diversity. The guide framed this work in terms of actions focusing on NASAA as an association and NASAA services supporting the work of SAAs. This framework guided our thinking regarding governance, management, and research and leadership development.
- NASAA published a new infographic that demonstrates SAA grant investments in low-income communities across America.
- Governance Committee explored models and best practices for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA published State Policies and Programs Addressing Diversity, a strategy sampler that catalogued and profiled SAA policies and programs.
- NASAA hosted webinar on America's changing demographics, featuring Dr. Manuel Pastor, a prominent specialist in sociology, American studies and ethnicity.
- Governance Committee drafted a policy statement for NASAA on diversity, equity and inclusion. The statement informed board discussions at the upcoming Leadership Institute.
- Executive Committee approved NASAA's updated employee handbook (which includes updates to equal employment opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act language). NASAA adopted a more rigorous approach for identifying and attracting more diverse candidate pools for hiring new employees.
- Board of directors convened for its strategic planning retreat and fall board meeting (two days). Both convenings included discussions to explore and provide guidance for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Bridging Difference and Diversity session was held at NASAA Assembly 2016 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- NASAA hosted the Professional Development Institute for SAA arts education managers and state education agency directors of arts education; the group explored the guiding question, How can our efforts to characterize inclusion, diversity, equity and access in arts learning support our development as champions for these practices within our agencies, states and the larger arts sector?
- NASAA CEO facilitated Maine SAA stakeholder convening to jump-start its conversation on diversity, equity and inclusion.

## **FY2017**

- Governance Committee continued its work to develop NASAA's policy statement and recommended related activities. It also formulated a plan to involve all 1,400 (est.) SAA staff and council members in informing our new policy.
- NASAA members from 40 states participated in developing NASAA's DEI policy. The Governance Committee continued to shepherd the process and finalize the draft statement.
- NASAA hosted webinar, *Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: SAA Programs and Policies*, to showcase work from the California Arts Council, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and Wisconsin Arts Board.
- NASAA board of directors approved the final draft of our association's new policy statement on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA shared its new diversity, equity and inclusion policy statement with all members and partners via the NASAA Notes newsletter.
- Governance Committee reviewed NASAA DEI activities to date; it also made recommendations for activities moving forward. The committee's ideas will continue to be shared for inclusion in planning activities. Importantly, the committee requested that our ongoing DEI activities continue to be catalogued and shared with the committee and board.
- NASAA released a new tool to promote equity in grant making: *Visualizing Grant Diversity: The Demographics of SAA Grants*. This customized tool will help SAAs better understand the alignment of their grant making with demographics. An interactive dashboard overlays grants data with state demographics. It's now available for all states and jurisdictions.

## **FY2018**

- NASAA members approved a new strategic plan that asserts NASAA's work is now guided by enduring values that include diversity, equity and inclusion. The strategic plan also includes a hyperlink to NASAA's DEI policy statement.
- People of Color Affinity Group was launched. The group is designed to provide an informal support system among people of color at state arts agencies, as well as to provide counsel to NASAA about the needs of people of color within our field. SAA staff and council members are participating.
- NASAA became facilitator of the Arts Education Partnership equity working group. The working group will research and report on equity in arts education programming active at national arts and educational organizations that are affiliated with AEP. Selected SAAs were also included within the working group.

We expect the research report will cite practices, policies, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities across the sector.

- Governance Committee reviewed the updated list of DEI activities and provides recommendations for activities moving forward.
- A mentorship program for SAA people of color was developed. The program is designed to provide career development assistance to people of color within the SAA family.
- NASAA held a daylong board and staff race equity workshop led by Race Forward, an organization that brings systemic analysis and an innovative approach to complex race issues to help people take effective action toward racial equity. Because Race Forward is home to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, the organization was especially qualified to help NASAA equip our state agency members for success in their funding equity work.

## FY2019

- NASAA Assembly 2018 was held, designed to provide numerous cross-cutting opportunities for DEI to be a component of the conference. DEI discussions and trainings were included in preconferences, deep dives, peer sessions and briefing sessions.
- NASAA's board meeting included the annual opportunity to report and reflect on our work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA began its deep focus on DEI in fall 2015. The work broadly includes all realms of human difference, as well as a focus on race equity. As of August 2018, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color on NASAA's board and staff:
  - In October 2015, **10%** of the NASAA board was made up of people of color. At this time, **28%** of the board is made up of people of color. (This calculation does not include Kristina Newman Scott, who recently departed the Connecticut SAA and the NASAA board; before her departure, 33% of the board included people of color.)
  - In October 2015, **16%** of the NASAA staff was made up of people of color, and at this time, **36%** of the staff is made up of people of color.
- NASAA piloted a DEI mentorship program for 10 mentor-mentee pairs. Pairs met virtually once per month to engage in conversations related to the mentee's state arts agency career goals and diversity, equity and inclusion considerations. Mentees met as a cohort twice via videoconference to share their insights and experiences. Mentors met as a cohort once to share their experiences. The program concluded with a debrief call bringing all participants together to reflect

on the pilot program and offer feedback on how to improve it to better serve members' needs in the future.

- The 2018 Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute (PDI) continued an exploration of inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on resilience and trauma-informed education practices.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Managers Peer Group met quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education, provide feedback for PDI planning, and develop a tool for peer group members to track how they are implementing "practical, tactical" changes to advance equity in their states' arts education programs and practices. The upcoming 2019 PDI was planned to emphasize meaningful engagement with rural, remote and tribal populations.
- NASAA chaired and facilitated the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group. The group conducted a scan of equity definitions, policies and practices among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.
- NASAA facilitated a working session with a subcommittee of the Arts Education Partnership's Equity Working Group to generate definitions of *diversity*, *equity* and *inclusion* to include in a forthcoming toolkit AEP is designing for its members.
- NASAA examined the distribution of state arts agency grant investments and established national benchmarks for [Rural Equity](#), [Economic Equity](#) and [Race Equity](#). These three interactive dashboards tell the story of state arts agencies' aggregate investments and articulate areas where there is room for collective improvement.
- NASAA's research team introduced a new generation of state level equity dashboards, [Visualizing Equity in Grant Making](#), expanding this suite of services. These dashboards now include two years of data as well as state-specific program analysis. The updated dashboards enable users to see changes in year-over-year funding and population shifts. Additionally, we piloted several dashboards incorporating state-specific program data that can provide insights into which programs have the greatest reach statewide.
- We continued to curate and circulate research resources on DEI, making information from other sectors readily accessible to SAAs. Examples include a Federal Reserve article on [The Effects of Gentrification](#), a study on [Cultural Festivals as Intergroup Settings](#) (conducted on the Festival of Pacific Arts, hosted by our Guam member agency), [tips on mediating constructive disagreements](#) in DEI conversations and [Gender Equity in Museums Movement](#). In fact, every 2019 edition of NASAA's Announcements and Resources column in NASAA Notes featured diversity, equity or inclusion resources.
- NASAA showcased state arts agencies' DEI work in NASAA's State to State column. Recently featured programs included the [Massachusetts DEI Plan](#), [Wisconsin's Woodland Indian Arts Initiative](#), [South Dakota's Tribal Arts Awards](#),



[New Jersey's Diversity in Arts Leadership Internship](#), [Alaska's ARTShops Initiative](#) and [Kansas's Indigenous Arts Initiative](#).

- NASAA delivered many member education programs to help SAAs meet their DEI goals. We infused DEI throughout our Assembly 2018 conference program and also dedicated sessions to [transformative equity at the Baltimore Museum of Art](#), [equity in panel processes](#), [leading inclusive dialogue](#), indigenous engagement and [using grants data to advance equitable grant policies](#). A DEI Profiles webinar shared the programs, policies and partnerships the California Arts Council is using to advance DEI.
- Our [State Arts Agency Staffing Trends](#) report included new data on the demographics of the state arts agency field, including baseline information on race, age, LGBTQA+, disability and veteran status.
- Nominating Committee and Planning & Budget Committee work over summer 2019 included specific questions about how NASAA can best assist SAAs with DEI. Interviews were conducted with 98 state arts agency executive directors and chairs/council members, and the report of findings explored how NASAA can support members in this priority area.
- NASAA joined ACES: The Society for Editing, which shares tips and provides training for avoiding bias traps, helping us attain greater inclusion in our language standards.
- NASAA's creative aging partnership with Aroha Philanthropies elevated the work that state arts agencies are doing to widen creative opportunities for older adults, a growing population that is disproportionately concentrated in rural areas and is more likely to be economically distressed, to experience food insecurity and to be living with health problems.
- NASAA collaborated with the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations to coauthor an article for the Community Development Innovation Review, a journal published by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco to promote cross-sector scholarship on economic resilience and mobility for low-income communities. The article recommended state policy innovations that hold the potential to support more equitable placemaking activity across the nation.
- NASAA grew the size of our affinity group for people of color. The group gathered for an in-person meeting at Assembly 2018, as well as during quarterly conference calls. In 2019 the group self-organized around topics of interest to the cohort, and NASAA provided a listserv for the group to remain connected between formal meetings.
- The 2019 Leadership Institute continued NASAA's efforts to provide numerous opportunities for DEI to be infused across the conference. DEI discussions and trainings were planned for peer groups, plenaries and breakout sessions.



- We continued our work to embody DEI principles in NASAA's recruitment practices and organizational culture. Time was regularly allocated for DEI sharing at all weekly staff meetings and at in-person board meetings.
- NASAA's most recent employee satisfaction survey, administered in late 2018, revealed:
  - Staff understands the importance of valuing differences and believes management demonstrates a commitment to valuing differences.
  - Staff agrees that NASAA activities are helping us make progress toward valuing diversity.
- NASAA included within our action plan DEI as one of four key priorities for our organization in 2019. This priority was also moving forward within the draft 2020 action plan.
- NASAA's Governance Committee reviewed 2019 DEI activities and recommended activities for the 2020 action plan.

## FY2020

- NASAA updated its national benchmarks for State Arts Agencies Advancing [Rural Equity](#), [Income Equity](#) and [Race Equity](#). These interactive dashboards describe state arts agency (SAA) investments in aggregate relative to demographics and identify areas where state arts agencies could focus further attention.
- NASAA continued our [Visualizing Equity in Grant Making](#) service, providing granular detail on the demographics of state arts agency grant making. Available analyses include populations of color, low-income areas, populations with disabilities, veteran populations and others.
- The [2019 NASAA Leadership Institute](#) emphasized DEI through plenary sessions on equity in grant making and in-depth workshops on bias in panel adjudication practices, inclusive leadership, anti-ageist programming and peer group dialogues around diversity issues.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group met quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education. A current focus of conversation was equity gaps in home based schooling and state plans to reopen classrooms after they were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The [Shifting Policy and Practice](#) online learning series (offered in lieu of a physical Assembly in 2020) focused on critical changes state arts agencies need to make to address DEI and create communities where all can flourish. Sessions explored our landscape of inequality, from community trauma to equitable grant making and more.

- Given the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on communities of color, poor families and older adults, NASAA made a concerted effort to integrate equity considerations into our member services addressing the pandemic. Our [COVID-19 Resources for State Arts Agencies](#) foregrounds antidiscrimination resources as well as facilitation tips to ensure inclusive dialogue. We emphasized equity considerations in how state arts agencies disseminate federal CARES Act funding through [NASAA communications](#) and SAA [program profiles](#).
- NASAA's creative aging partnership with Aroha Philanthropies strengthened the ability of state arts agencies to address the needs of older adults, a growing population that is highly vulnerable to discrimination, poor health, isolation and poverty. NASAA submitted a proposal requesting substantial new funding to support this work in 2021 and 2022.
- We continued to elevate state arts agency programs addressing DEI in monthly State to State bulletins. We recently spotlighted programs from [California](#), [Nevada](#), [New York](#) and [Rhode Island](#), among others. We are also using this vehicle to deliberately elevate the work of our island jurisdiction members. [Northern Marianas](#), [Puerto Rico](#) and the [Virgin Islands](#) all received visibility, with American Samoa and Guam to follow.
- We launched an [Inclusive Language Guide](#) for state arts agencies. Offering language guidance around race, ability, age, LGBTQA+ identity, economic status and more, this new guide coaches our field on how to avoid stereotypes and acknowledge differences with respect.
- In conjunction with the Inclusive Language Guide rollout, NASAA created a new [hub for DEI](#) on our website. It provides one-stop shopping for models, resources, professional development opportunities and the policy documents that guide NASAA's DEI work.
- NASAA planned a [virtual convocation](#) for state arts agency community development coordinators in fall 2020. Sponsored by ArtPlace America, this professional development program was designed through a DEI lens to address how SAAs can foster equitable community development, empower historically marginalized groups and prevent the unintended consequences of some creative placemaking efforts.
- NASAA was developing a new Equity Choice Points tool that will help state arts agencies identify bias and barriers embedded within their traditional grant-making practices. We intend it to become a practical tool to assist with eligibility and adjudication criteria as well as application and award processes. The tool will be presented during our fall 2020 Learning Series, [Shifting Policy and Practice: Insights and Actions for States](#).

- NASAA began developing an inventory of consultants and facilitators that SAAs have used for DEI training and equity work at the state level. These referrals will become a resource for members seeking to engage experienced consultants for DEI work with their staff, councils or grantees. We expect to publish the inventory later this year.
- NASAA supported the efforts of the SAA People of Color Affinity Group. This year the affinity group onboarded leadership from the field and conducted planning for group convenings that will take place during fall and winter 2020. Affinity group leadership consists of cochairs and an advisor representing SAA staff and council members.
- The Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute (PDI) continued to explore inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on serving rural, remote and tribal populations through asset based approaches to grant making. PDI convenings take place in October 2020.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group met quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education.
- NASAA's research team reported to the People of Color Affinity Group on the issue of retaining staff of color. We included the policies and practices of what various public-sector agencies do to retain staff of color.
- NASAA continued to provide customized counsel and assistance to state arts agencies as they work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within their portfolios.
- We continued to embed diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) questions into all our nominating interviews and action planning conversations, ensuring that a broad spectrum of DEI factors inform NASAA's governance, programming and operations.
- Internally, the NASAA staff maintained a discipline of holding weekly all-staff conversations about DEI, to offer ideas and embed key concepts into our work as a team. We established a #anti-racism Slack channel to make it easy to share resources internally.
- The NASAA board of directors continued to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including a DEI segment at its meetings.
- The Governance Committee continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2020 activities included: a review of NASAA's DEI policy statement, a review of NASAA's FY2020 DEI activities list and applying an equity lens to at-large nomination practices.
- NASAA continued to diversify how and where we recruit candidates for staff positions. We include outreach at historically Black colleges and universities in

the Washington, D.C., area, and from Richmond, Virginia, to Baltimore, Maryland. NASAA also began recruiting on the highly rated diversity focused websites. We continued to conduct individual outreach efforts with colleagues of color as they become part of our network, helping us promote our job openings through their personal/professional networks.

- NASAA operations staff continued to participate in human resources/diversity training through Society for Human Resource Management webinars and networking with the American Management Association diversity group.
- NASAA's 2020 Nominating Committee prioritized identifying diverse candidates, specifically people of color, people under 50 and people from states that have been underrepresented on the NASAA board. In addition, the committee made changes to NASAA's board nominations process to reduce barriers to participation, including streamlining application forms and asking nominators to write statements of support for prospective candidates.
- We lent a leadership voice to DEI within and beyond our membership. [NASAA Continues to Prioritize Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) and [America, the Arts and Racial Injustice](#) are just two examples. We also made sure that NASAA and SAAs have a presence in equity work being led by other national organizations. NASAA staff participated in the Native Arts & Culture: Resilience, Reclamation & Relevance convening hosted by the National Endowment for the Arts, and in two racial equity forums hosted by Grantmakers in the Arts.
- NASAA chaired the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) Equity Working Group. The group is a professional learning community that gathers to support ongoing learning and dialogue related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.
- NASAA provided keynote and panel presentations on the arts as a rural development asset at several conferences during FY2020. National presentations were provided at the Rural Arts and Culture Summit in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and at the Grantmakers in the Arts conference in Denver, Colorado. A statewide arts summit presentation on the topic was provided in Cheyenne, Wyoming. NASAA promoted this work through its social media channels.
- NASAA provided or participated in panel presentations on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at several conferences during FY2020. A national presentation on equity in grant making was provided at the Grantmakers in the Arts annual conference in Denver, Colorado. A statewide arts conference presentation on inclusive excellence was provided in Indianapolis, Indiana.