

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities

October 2020 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 two components: fiscal year 2020 DEI activities and an archive of activities undertaken from FY2016 through FY2019. FY2020 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

FY2020

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

a NASAA updated our national benchmarks for State Arts Agencies Advancing [Rural Equity](#), [Income Equity](#) and [Race Equity](#). These three interactive dashboards describe state arts agency (SAA) investments in aggregate relative to demographics and identify areas where state arts agencies could focus further attention.

a 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.

a 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.

a 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 is equity gaps in home based schooling and state plans to reopen classrooms.

a The [Shifting Policy and Practice](#) online learning series (being offered in lieu of a physical Assembly in 2020) focuses on critical changes state arts agencies need to make to address DEI and create communities where all can flourish. Sessions explore our landscape of inequality, from community trauma to equitable grant making and more.

a 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](#).

a NASAA's creative aging partnership with Aroha Philanthropies strengthens 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.

a We continue 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.

a 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.

a 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.

a NASAA is planning a [virtual convocation](#) for state arts agency community development coordinators in fall 2020. Sponsored by ArtPlace America, this professional development program is being 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.

a NASAA is 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](#).

a NASAA has begun 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.

a The Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute (PDI) continues 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.

a The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group meets quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education.

a 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.

a NASAA continues to provide customized counsel and assistance to state arts agencies as they work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within their portfolios.

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

b 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.

b Internally, the NASAA staff maintains 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.

b The NASAA board of directors continues to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including a DEI segment at its meetings.

b The Governance Committee continues to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2020 activities include: 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.

b NASAA continues 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 continue 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.

b NASAA operations staff continues to participate in human resources/diversity training through Society for Human Resource Management webinars and networking with the American Management Association diversity group.

b 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.

c. Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Strategic Partnerships

c We lend 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 make 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.

c NASAA chairs 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.

c 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.

c 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.

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 2020, 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 (PoC). As of October 2020, **52%** of the FY2021 NASAA board will be comprised of people of color.
- In October 2015, **16%** of the NASAA staff was made up of PoC. To date, **35%** of the NASAA staff are people of color.

Plans for FY2021

We expect to maintain all multiyear efforts to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion, including but not limited to the following:

- FY21** • Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute, with its continued focus on equity and access
- Visualizing Equity in Grant Making mapping services for state arts agencies
- Updating national benchmarking for rural equity, income equity and race equity
- Infusing DEI principles across all NASAA learning services
- Elevating state arts agencies' programs addressing DEI
- Lending a leadership voice to DEI within and beyond our membership
- Supporting NASAA's SAA People of Color Affinity Group

In addition, in FY2021 NASAA plans to:

- FY21** Launch the second iteration of NASAA's mentorship program for SAA people of color.

- FY21** Through the [Education Commission of the States](#) and the [Arts Education Partnership](#), encourage the adoption of state policies and practices that strengthen arts learning. Lead the AEP Equity Working Group to embed diversity, equity and inclusion practices into the work of AEP and its partners.

- FY21** Initiate a new grant-making audit and review service that engages DEI experts to assess equity factors in state arts agency grant guidelines, adjudication criteria and award systems. Use assessment results to spur changes in state arts agency policy and practice to attain greater equity in

how public arts resources are deployed. [Activity contingent upon securing foundation support.]

FY21 Share models of DEI policies, assessment strategies and program development tools used by other networks.

FY21 Curate and circulate research from non-NASAA sources that inform members about trends, data and evaluation methods relevant to the work of state arts agencies. Priority will be placed on research that addresses DEI and strategic adaptations to systems of arts support following the onset of COVID-19.

FY21 Cooperate with the National Endowment for the Arts to support a series of virtual gatherings to be held in late 2020/early 2021 of state folk and traditional arts staffers focused on fostering racial equity in the field. Inform that convening with a field survey addressing the demographics of the state folklife network.

NASAA FY2016-2019 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities

FY2016

- NASAA board of directors and new CEO discuss diversity, equity and inclusion; this conversation, which occurs in a board meeting open to members during the Leadership Institute, launches NASAA's efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Inclusive Leadership session is held at the Salt Lake City, Utah, Leadership Institute. The session explores how SAAs can address the needs of changing communities through policies and practice.
- NASAA publishes an info guide to inform SAA members about our work to advance diversity. The guide frames this work in terms of actions focusing on NASAA as an association and NASAA services supporting the work of SAAs. This

framework guides our thinking regarding governance, management, research and leadership development.

- NASAA publishes a new infographic that demonstrates SAA grant investments in low-income communities across America.
- Governance Committee explores models and best practices for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA publishes State Policies and Programs Addressing Diversity, a strategy sampler that catalogues and profiles SAA policies and programs.
- NASAA hosts webinar on America's changing demographics, featuring Dr. Manuel Pastor, a prominent specialist in sociology, American studies and ethnicity.
- Governance Committee drafts a policy statement for NASAA on diversity, equity and inclusion. The statement informs board discussions at the upcoming Leadership Institute.
- Executive Committee approves NASAA's updated employee handbook (which includes updates to equal employment opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act language). NASAA adopts a more rigorous approach for identifying and attracting more diverse candidate pools for hiring new employees.
- Board of directors convenes for its strategic planning retreat and fall board meeting (two days). Both convenings include discussions to explore and provide guidance for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Bridging Difference and Diversity session is held at NASAA Assembly 2016 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- NASAA hosts the Professional Development Institute for SAA arts education managers and state education agency directors of arts education; the group explores 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 facilitates Maine SAA stakeholder convening to jump-start its conversation on diversity, equity and inclusion.

FY2017

- Governance Committee continues its work to develop NASAA's policy statement and recommends related activities. It also formulates a plan to involve all 1,400 (est.) SAA staff and council members in informing our new policy.
- NASAA members from 40 states participate in developing NASAA's DEI policy. The Governance Committee continues to shepherd the process and finalize the draft statement.
- NASAA hosts 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 approves the final draft of our association's new policy statement on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA shares its new diversity, equity and inclusion policy statement with all members and partners via the NASAA Notes newsletter.
- Governance Committee reviews NASAA DEI activities to date; it also makes recommendations for activities moving forward. The committee's ideas will continue to be shared for inclusion in planning activities. Importantly, the committee requests that our ongoing DEI activities continue to be catalogued and shared with the committee and board.
- NASAA releases 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 approve 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 is launched. The group is designed to provide an informal support system among PoC at state arts agencies, as well as to provide counsel to NASAA about the needs of PoC within our field. SAA staff and council members are participating.

- NASAA becomes 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 are also included within the working group. We expect the research report will cite practices, policies, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities across the sector.
- Governance Committee reviews the updated list of DEI activities and provides recommendations for activities moving forward.
- A mentorship program for SAA people of color is developed. The program is designed to provide career development assistance to PoC 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 is held and designed to provide numerous cross-cutting opportunities for DEI to be a component of the conference. DEI discussions and trainings are included in preconferences, deep dives, peer sessions and briefing sessions.
- NASAA's board meeting includes 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 PoC. At this time, **28%** of the board is made up of PoC. (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 PoC.)
 - In October 2015, **16%** of the NASAA staff was made up of PoC, and at this time, **36%** of the staff is made up of PoC.

- NASAA pilots a DEI Mentorship program for 10 mentor-mentee pairs. Pairs meet 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 meet as a cohort twice via videoconference to share their insights and experiences. Mentors meet as a cohort once to share their experiences. The program concludes 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) continues 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 Peer Group meets 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 is planned to emphasize meaningful engagement with rural, remote and tribal populations.
- NASAA chairs and facilitates the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group. The group conducts a scan of equity definitions, policies and practices among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.
- NASAA facilitates 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 examines the distribution of state arts agency grant investments and establishes 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 introduces 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've piloted several dashboards incorporating state-specific program data that can provide insights into which programs have the greatest reach statewide.
- We continue 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 the Museums Movement](#). In fact, every 2019 edition of NASAA's Announcements and Resources column in NASAA Notes has featured diversity, equity or inclusion resources.

- NASAA showcases state arts agencies' DEI work in NASAA's State to State column. Recently featured programs include 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 delivers many member education programs to help SAAs meet their DEI goals. We infuse DEI throughout our Assembly 2018 conference program and also dedicate 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 shares the programs, policies and partnerships the California Arts Council is using to advance DEI.
- Our [State Arts Agency Staffing Trends](#) report includes 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 includes specific questions about how NASAA can best assist SAAs with DEI. Interviews are conducted with 98 state arts agency executive directors and chairs/council members, and the report of findings explores how NASAA can support members in this priority area.
- NASAA joins 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 elevates 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 collaborates 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 recommends state policy innovations that hold the potential to support more equitable placemaking activity across the nation.

- NASAA grows the size of our affinity group for people of color. The group gathers for an in-person meeting at Assembly 2018, as well as during quarterly conference calls. In 2019 the group self-organizes around topics of interest to the cohort, and NASAA provides a listserv for the group to remain connected between formal meetings.
- The 2019 Leadership Institute continues NASAA's efforts to provide numerous opportunities for DEI to be infused across the conference. To this end, DEI discussions and trainings are planned for peer groups, plenaries and breakout sessions.
- We continue our work to embody DEI principles in NASAA's recruitment practices and organizational culture. Time is 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 includes within our action plan DEI as one of four key priorities for our organization in 2019. This priority is also moving forward within the draft 2020 action plan.
- NASAA's Governance Committee reviews 2019 DEI activities and recommends activities for the 2020 action plan.