

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities

## September 2023 Update

NASAA updates and publishes its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) 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](#), our efforts span the breadth of NASAA's programmatic, policy and management portfolios.

This document is comprised of fiscal year 2023 DEI activities from October 2022 – September 2023. For DEI activities undertaken from FY2016 through FY2022, see our [archive](#). FY2023 activities are categorized as follows:

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

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

- In collaboration with the Illinois Arts Council, NASAA launched the Illinois Equitable Grant-making Assessment Initiative (EGAIN). Modeled after the [Equity GAP Project](#) piloted with Ohio in 2022, EGAIN will assess the agency's grant-making practices through an equity lens. The study will involve extensive constituent consultation as well as a robust geospatial analysis of Illinois grant investments in rural, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and/or people of color), disabled and low-income communities. Recommendations will identify policy and practice actions the agency can take to advance funding equity statewide.

- NASAA began a new initiative, [Strengthening State Arts Agency Relationships with Native Communities](#), to help our member agencies foster meaningful connections with Indigenous artists, Native organizations and tribal governments. We formed an Indigenous Circle of Advisors to guide our efforts, and have conducted more than 20 interviews to date with Native culture bearers, Native nonprofits, tribal liaisons and state offices of tribal relations, among others.
- Through our [legislative scanning process](#), [NASAA tracked](#) bills pertaining to DEI and the arts. We also monitor bills relevant to critical race theory, "divisive concepts," transgender performers and LGBTQ+ issues, to assess how they affect the operating environment for state arts agencies.
- NASAA supported the efforts of the [People of Color Affinity Group](#) for state arts agency staff and council members who identify as people of color. 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 state arts agency staff and council members.
- Numerous peer group activities revolved around DEI. Quarterly calls of executive directors, deputy directors, accessibility coordinators, grants officers, community development coordinators and public information officers explored issues relating to equitable grant making and ways of advancing DEI work within state government.
- NASAA convened a special session for executive directors facing arts controversies or policy challenges related to their own DEI work or the activities undertaken by grantees working on LGBTQ+ or BIPOC issues.
- The arts education managers' DEI+A (including access) Subcommittee hosts quarterly sessions for state arts agency arts education managers. These sessions provide a forum for sharing resources and strategies to advance equitable education as well as equitable state arts agency services for educators, teaching artists and other education stakeholders.
- NASAA answered numerous DEI information requests from members. Topics included DEI planning, metrics and measurement, equitable grant making, and program design for underserved communities.
- We featured DEI resources in every issue of our NASAA Notes newsletter. We shared resources on a wide range of topics including artist income and wage equity, equity assessment methods, strategies for supporting BIPOC leaders, and facilitating organizational change around DEI goals.

- NASAA's State to State resource elevates examples of [state arts agencies' DEI work](#). Selected program profiles added this year include New Mexico's [Bosque Redondo Memorial residency](#), Indiana's [grant-making evaluation](#) efforts, Alaska's [Youth Cultural Heritage](#) program, Texas and South Carolina's [rural support](#) strategies, Oklahoma's [capitol exhibit](#) program, and Pennsylvania and Utah's [creative aging](#) portfolios.
- NASAA is working on a significant upgrade to our [Visualizing Equity in Grant Making](#) dashboards. We're streamlining the user interface and adding new data elements to help state arts agencies better understand the population demographics, economic status and social vulnerability (as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) of communities they are reaching through grant funds.
- NASAA maintained the currency of the [Inclusive Language Guide](#) and the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources](#) web page.
- Our creative aging partnership with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy continued to combat ageism and support important state level work in helping to extend creative aging services to historically under-resourced communities. We completed an independent evaluation of the [Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging](#) initiative and launched a new phase of work in [States Leading Creative Aging](#). This new program supports continued professional development programs for all 56 states and jurisdictions and invests **\$95,000** grant awards to nine states for leadership level work with creative aging partners.
- NASAA is developing new analyses that will provide further insights into the distribution of SAA grants and equity considerations. New geographic analyses will examine the national distribution of state arts agency grants at the census tract level. These will provide a granular view of SAA grant data across the Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index and the American Community Survey's percentage of population below the poverty line. Other new factsheets will examine SAA operating Support grantees by organization budget size and overlapping grantees between the NEA and SAAs.

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

- NASAA launched a multiyear Equity Audit engaging NASAA staff, board and membership. Board members were interviewed about governance topics by our equity advisors at Team Dynamics. Board and staff participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory assessment process. More than a dozen focus groups were conducted with member peer groups to invite feedback and gain insights into equity issues and challenges facing our

association. Also, annual interviews of state arts agency leaders allow for the inclusion of executive and council chair level input about NASAA's DEI portfolio.

- We conducted an accessibility audit of the NASAA website, to improve its utility for individuals with limited vision. We're making a number of adjustments to improve the visitor experience and align with accessible-interface standards.
- The NASAA board of directors continued to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including DEI segments as meeting agenda items.
- The Governance Committee continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2023 activities included a review of NASAA's priorities regarding board composition and attributes needed.
- To support work on our new Native Communities initiative, NASAA staff participated in self-directed learning about the history, culture and governance structures of Native peoples.
- NASAA conducted a board demographics survey.
- Our editorial guide for written materials is kept up to date with language and terms that are inclusive and welcoming to diverse populations.
- DEI activities and achievements are reported annually to the board and membership.

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

- NASAA served as a resource for the BIPOC-led Arts Advocacy Coalition at the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures federal advocacy summit.
- NASAA's CEO continues to represent NASAA and SAAs in the Grantmakers in the Arts Cultural Policy Action Lab.
- NASAA continues to support inclusive excellence in its work with the Creative States Coalition (CSC) and BIPOC-led Arts Advocacy Coalition (BLAAC).
- NASAA President and CEO Pam Breau participated in the Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) [Puerto Rico – The Diaspora, The Island](#) webinar. The webinar served as the first of many conversations among GIA members about unlearning the narrative that Puerto Rico is solely a destination island. The webinar was designed to help prepare GIA members for

their fall conference in Puerto Rico.

- NASAA presented the findings from the [Equity GAP Project](#) at the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations conference. NASAA brought a public-sector lens to the Courageous Unlearning conference, a national forum for funders to explore ways of dismantling systemic funding inequities.
- 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 May 2023, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color at NASAA:
  - As of May 2023, 59% of the NASAA board is comprised of people of color. As of the same date, approximately 40% of the staff is comprised of people of color.

For archived activities, see [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities at NASAA: Archive](#).