

# National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY

## State Arts Agency Peer Groups

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What are peer groups?**

A: Peer groups are "job-alike" groups of individuals within the state arts agency field who share similar roles or responsibilities. In addition to meeting at [NASAA conferences](#), peer groups stay in year-round contact with one another through e-mail, [listserv](#) dialogues and teleconferences.

**Q: Is there a peer group for council members?**

A: Yes! In addition to peer groups for various staff positions, NASAA offers a group for volunteer leaders (state arts agency chairs and council members). This group meets regularly to discuss policy and governance issues and to explore the roles of volunteer leaders and advocates.

**Q: Is participation in a peer group required?**

A: Peer group participation is entirely voluntary, but highly recommended. Peer groups provide a strong professional community that can be a source of information, advice and moral support. Active participation in a peer group builds your knowledge, strengthens you as a leader, and provides valuable opportunities for you to compare strategies and perspectives with a national network.

**Q: Do peer groups meet every year?**

A: All peer groups meet during "Assembly" years, years when the complete NASAA community gathers for a large meeting. NASAA Assembly 2018 in Baltimore, Maryland, is one of those occasions. Peer groups may also elect to gather—in person or via teleconference—at other times.

**Q: How are peer group meetings at NASAA conferences organized?**

A: Peer groups are organized on a volunteer basis. This means that individual groups elect to gather, set their own agendas and lead their own sessions. This not only makes it operationally feasible for NASAA to host many group gatherings, but also ensures that the agendas stay highly responsive to the current interests and needs of the field. NASAA urges peer session organizers to consult with their colleagues around the country for agenda input. If you have suggestions to offer, please contact your group coordinator(s).

**Q: How are peer groups chosen?**

A: Each time that NASAA gathers as a full Assembly, all peer groups that would like to meet are welcome to do so. New groups that can demonstrate the ability to organize themselves and engage a critical mass of participants are also welcome, pending a discussion with NASAA about the group's goals. If you are part of a new group that is considering a gathering, please contact [Eric Giles](#) for more information.

**Q: Who can attend peer group sessions at NASAA conferences?**

A: Anyone! All NASAA sessions are open to all conference participants as well as to occasional outside observers. Please help us maintain this spirit of welcome inclusion.

**Q: What if I belong to more than one peer group?**

A: Many state arts agency staffers are wearing multiple hats. During an Assembly, when several peer groups meet simultaneously, agencies should try to bring as large of a team as possible to cover the maximum number of sessions. Individuals may elect to split their time among multiple peer sessions.

**Q: Is travel support available to attend peer sessions?**

A: NASAA does not provide any direct travel funding or registration offsets for meeting attendance, but does offer team discounts to make staff and council member participation more affordable. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has generously supported Arts Education peer group gatherings at most NASAA conferences. The Folk Arts peer group also has received NEA support in some years. State arts agencies are encouraged to take advantage of these travel funds—which NASAA manages through cooperative agreements with the NEA—during years when they are available.

**Q: How do I sign up?**

A: Visit NASAA's [Peer Groups](#) page to read notes from past peer group sessions and peruse peer group rosters. Make sure that NASAA has your correct contact information, including your title, job function and areas of interest, so that you are included in the appropriate rosters. These rosters are used by NASAA and by peer group volunteer leaders for communications. Contact [Brandon Miller](#) to verify your information.

If you have additional questions about peer groups, please contact [Eric Giles](#).