



## Grants & Fiscal Officers Peer Session November 1, 2018

### Notes

Grants & Fiscal Officers Peer Session coordinators:

[Wanda DeJarnette](#), Grants and Fiscal Officer, Alabama State Council on the Arts

[Hal Partlow](#), Associate Director of Grants, Tennessee Arts Commission

[Laura Wiegand](#), Director of Programs & Technology, Texas Commission on the Arts

### **Audit Presentation by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Inspector General Office and Grants Office**

*NEA Presenters:*

[Brenna Berger](#), Senior Advisor to the Deputy for Programs and Partnerships

[Nicki Jacobs](#), Director, Grants and Contracts Office

[Mindy Garfinkel](#), Final Reports Officer

[Leslie Liberato](#), Final Reports Officer

[Meg Kowalik](#), Grants Management Specialist

[Ron Stith](#), Inspector General

[Monica Muhammad](#), Assistant Inspector General for Audits

[Darlan Mims](#), Senior Auditor

A joint meeting was held with deputy directors and grants officers to learn more about state arts agency federal audits and ask questions of the NEA's Inspector General Office and Grants Office. The auditors went over risk assessments, required documentation, the audit process and common findings of deficiencies. Participants engaged in an extensive question and answer period with the auditors and grants office staff, after which the audit section of the session concluded and the deputy directors moved to their own meeting.

### [NEA Auditors Handout](#)

To connect with your peers who have undergone audits, please contact NASAA Chief Operating Officer [Sylvia Prickett](#) or Senior Director of Research [Ryan Stubbs](#).

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Participants introduced themselves.

## **Review of Grants & Fiscal Officer Survey**

Participants viewed a slideshow of highlights from the Grants and Fiscal Officer Survey conducted over the summer. Highlights included what Grants Management System platforms state arts agencies are using and their level satisfaction with it, what platforms they are looking to transition to and their concerns, and the level of state arts agency participation in DataArts. A report of this survey is available in the proceedings. Peers noted that DataArts can be targeted to large organizations and that formula-funded programs and can be challenging for smaller organizations.

### [Grants Peer Survey Results](#)

## **Assessing & Guiding the Arts Field**

Conferees participated in a wide-ranging discussion on assessing the arts:

- Implementing race equity training in the agencies' work: Problems in asking grantees for their demographics if state laws prohibit such questions in order to protect against discrimination.
- The three fields for Populations Benefiting don't ask about the grantee's demographics, thereby missing valuable insight into who our grantees are.
- Diversity toolkits are very useful in advancing the equity work of state arts agencies.
- Challenges of applicants not following instructions for filling out grant application forms; much handholding needed for some.
- Questions for states with legal marijuana on whether grantee organizations are allowed to accept funding from the marijuana industry.

## **Open Discussion**

A free-wheeling discussion on anything the peers wished to talk about.

- Interest in video narratives for applications: Some SAAs do this but others are concerned about videos taking up too much space on servers.
- Prospective applicants can be discouraged from applying for a grant if agencies require video narratives.
- Challenges in how to train panelists to evaluate video narratives.
- Panelists should be encouraged to watch more video narratives...
- ...though some applicants upload so much video that panelists cannot fully review.
- Train panelists in diversity.
- Discussions over paying panelists. Some agencies are starting for the first time, other agencies are questioned by their state over the legality of the payments.
- Panelist cash payments range between \$50 and \$700.
- State arts agencies are interested in using GoToMeeting for panel meetings.
- Board and council members have varying participation levels in the panel process, from simply attending to approving awards all the way to serving on panels themselves as full voting members.
- The Grants and Fiscal Officers Peer Group wants a preconference for future Assemblies because a single peer session is not enough time to exchange ideas.
- Peers love the NASAA Grants Officers Listserv and the fast replies they get to their questions.