



## Deputy/Assistant Directors Peer Session September 19, 2019

### Notes

Deputy/Assistant Directors Peer Session coordinators:

Chandra Boyd, Deputy Director, Oklahoma Arts Council  
Mike Markey, Deputy Director, Nebraska Arts Council  
Natalie Petersen, Assistant Director, Utah Division of Arts & Museums

The peer session coordinators welcomed the attendees and kicked off the session by asking everyone to introduce themselves and share a favorite success story from their agency:

Chandra Boyd (Deputy Director, Oklahoma Arts Council)

- Proud of intentional recruitment, which has diversified their team. There is still one more position to fill.

Mike Markey (Deputy Director, Nebraska Arts Council)

- Highlighted the Nebraska Strong Creative Flood Relief Program, where artists, communities and social workers are working together. The agency is reaching more parts of state without arts programming.

Natalie Petersen (Assistant Director, Utah Division of Arts & Museums)

- An increase of \$2 million in their grant budget was appropriated by the legislature.

Rebecca Cruz (Deputy Director, South Dakota Arts Council)

- There's a lot going on in South Dakota: new leadership, a new governor, and an expansion of their staff and offices. Rebecca will be moving to different part of state and opening a satellite office.

Molly O'Connor (Assistant Director, Oklahoma Arts Council)

- Discussed their annual conference, which featured a blessing by a tribal elder.

Adam Perry (Vice President for Strategy and Programs, Arts Midwest)

- Mentioned the We the Many project, which seeks to expand the understanding of what it means to be a Midwesterner through the creative exchange of cultures and ideas.

David Holland (Director of Public Policy, Western States Arts Federation)

- Has been there for only one month. Just launched a mobile version of their ZAPP app.

Kathleen Morrissey (Assistant Director, Missouri Arts Council)

- Highlighted challenging transitions in Missouri, which can't be fully planned for. Legislation enacted to move state arts agency (SAA) to lieutenant governor's office. New Smart Simple grant system.

Alex Nelson (Deputy Director, Arizona Commission on the Arts)

- Two years in this position. Amid a flurry of activity and with a new executive director at the helm, the agency is focusing on systemic inequities.

Ayanna Kiburi (Deputy Director, California Arts Council)

- Highlighted their \$10 million budget increase, and that they are finishing up their strategic visioning.

Amy Cunningham (Vermont Arts Council)

- Discussed their Creation Grants, which are expanding funding to individual artists, for the first time in part by private funding. Also doing significant creative economy research.

Ashley Brown (Deputy Director, South Carolina Arts Council)

- Has been in this position for one month, after four years with the SAA. Their Art of Community program has inspired restructuring in the agency, and staff have embraced the change.

Rachel Clifton (Assistant Director, Wyoming Arts Council)

- They've experienced a lot of turnover in the past few years, and are now fully staffed. Can now make pilot programs ongoing ones.

Andrew Henley (Deputy Director, Alabama State Council on the Arts)

- Has been with the agency for two months. Highlighted their Artistic Literacy Consortia, a collaboration with the state department of education on work related to teaching artists, artists, students and teachers.

Jim Bob McMillan (Deputy Director, Texas Commission on the Arts)

- Noted that they are changing their grants management system. Received a large budget increase: \$10 million for cultural district program and \$5 million for a performing arts center (supported by a legislator). Additionally, the Commission now has \$5 million per year dedicated for distribution to cultural districts.

Mollie Quinlan-Hayes (Deputy Director, South Arts)

- Good news on the ArtsReady front: the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has added a question about readiness planning to its grant application.

Larry Morrissey (Deputy Director, Mississippi Arts Commission)

- Highlighted the use of the state capitol building for an agency event.

Freddy Velez (Deputy Director, Institute of Puerto Rican Culture)

- Described their Cultura Rodante project, which served more than 150,000 people by bringing culture to hurricane-damaged communities.

Dave Slatery (Deputy Director, Massachusetts Cultural Council)

- The SAA has received bad press, being accused of wasting tax dollars on junkets. They're undergoing an NEA audit. They have received the largest budget ever from the state.

Terry West (Deputy Director, Washington State Arts Commission)

- Proud of having designated their first three creative districts.

Jenifer Lawless (Operations Director, Massachusetts Cultural Council)

- Revised their personnel policies.

Steven Skerritt-Davis (Deputy Director, Maryland State Arts Council)

- Worked for the first time with their advocacy group on the Maryland Arts Summit; approximately 500 artists, arts education specialists, teaching artists, arts administrators, cultural district managers attended.

Paige Sharpe (Deputy Director of Programs, Indiana Arts Commission)

- Lots of creative entrepreneurs in the state. SAA started a career accelerator program with fellowship attached, which has been very successful.

Stuart Weiser (Deputy Director, Idaho Commission on the Arts)

- They are shifting the dialogue in the legislature to focus on economic impact of arts. Received a budget increase.

Cassie Mason (Chief Grants Officer, New Hampshire State Council on the Arts)

- Highlighted the many new maker spaces around the state.

Carol White (Associate Director of Operations, Tennessee Arts Commission)

- Received a \$1 million grant from the department of health for creative aging project.

Jane Preston (Deputy Director, New England Foundation for the Arts)

- Described their Creative Communities Exchange, an effort to bring in project staff to share stories and network.

Miah Michaelson (Deputy Director, Indiana Arts Commission)

- Their annual conference this year focuses on diversity, equity and inclusion; postconference cultural competency workshops. Have received 100 applications for scholarships and will be able to fund all of them!

Dan Katona (Deputy Director, Ohio Arts Council)

- Have received their highest budget ever. For the second year in a row they have awarded a grant to every county in state. Have rekindled an annual conference after a 15-year hiatus.

Tammy Herman (Director of Programs and Services, New Jersey State Council on the Arts)

- Current governor values the arts. Finishing an NEA audit. Participated for the first time in the Diversity in Arts Leadership program via Americans for the Arts.

Linda Underwood (Operations Director and Fiscal Officer, New Mexico Arts)

- Executive director position still vacant. Expect a new state poet laureate.

Participants then discussed the following topics of interest in smaller groups and reported out to the full group.

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility**

What are best practices to ensure both equity and efficiency?

- outside consultants/staff training
- race equity is priority
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity
- integrate into strategic planning
- promote culture of inclusion
- engaging native artists

### **Rural vs. Urban Focus**

And how that impacts equity

- moving beyond stereotypes
- asset based approach
- building networks
- local decision making
- identifying local stakeholders
- National Governors Association rural report
- data is a resource
- collaborations
- leveraging partnerships
- cross-sector
- cultural competency
- broader definition of arts and culture

### **HR & Management Issues**

- struggle as SAA and as state agency; bureaucracy
- policy vs. practice
- tension over documentation
- staff meetings
- Google Drive good way to share forms
- how strengthen on-boarding process,
- creating/strengthening employee handbook
- telework policies

### **NEA Audit**

- reports of positive and negative experiences
- free up financial people to get all necessary documents
- best to establish relationship with auditor
- *Issues*
  - guidelines not tied to policies
  - retrieving old documents
  - new staff
  - NEA can ask for money back
- *Solutions*
  - prepare
  - make sure all steps are in a policy
  - train all staff that touch grants
  - look at 504 workbook