

## Individual Giving to NASAA 2010 – 2020

### HISTORY

In 2003, NASAA's inaugural development committee established the Affiliate Program, a pilot program introduced in six states, to educate council members about NASAA and solicit personal contributions. In 2010, due to the pilot's success and with the board's approval, NASAA transitioned the Affiliate Program to a national annual fund, the largest and most organized individual giving effort NASAA had ever undertaken.

Since then some notable activities include:

- In 2013 NASAA held its **first matching gift campaign**, significantly boosting donor participation and skyrocketing total dollars raised. Since then we have conducted two more matching gift campaigns.
- In 2018 NASAA began **raising funds at our annual conference**, leveraging peer-to-peer fundraising and in-person outreach.
- In 2019 NASAA launched the **Signature Society**, a new program that honors and encourages people making gifts of \$1,000+. Signature Society members help us influence decision-makers at the highest levels and create long-term solutions for the arts in the United States. Nola Ruth chairs this important group.

Today, the purpose of the NASAA Annual Fund remains *to raise awareness of NASAA's mission and services, and to diversify contributed revenue by expanding individual giving.*

### WHY A NASAA ANNUAL FUND

Goals for the Annual Fund are to raise awareness of NASAA, what we do for state arts agencies, and why our work matters to people in every community across the United States. Many members know about and understand NASAA, but many do not, and the annual fund is one way of evening out that gap.

For people who understand all that state arts agencies do, NASAA's annual fund helps them support what's important to them—it's a vehicle for people to express their values. As more people come to understand state arts agencies, and the role that NASAA plays in strengthening them, the more friends we develop—friends who see the connection between their support of NASAA, the success of their agencies and the vitality of their communities. This in turn leads to better advocacy, deeper engagement, and more people who have a stake in our success.

Gifts from individuals are so important because they provide unrestricted support where NASAA needs it most—typically to fund our increasing advocacy activities and costs, which are not covered by our NEA grant or member dues. The vast majority of philanthropic dollars in the United States come from individuals, and the annual fund galvanizes this

support. It also helps us build relationships with donors, some of who over time become major givers. Finally, the annual fund is important because it leverages other types of support. In demonstrating the *personal* support of members, the annual fund sends a powerful message to current and potential funders that the investment of our members is widespread, strong and enduring.

## **HOW IT WORKS**

### ***Who***

An organization's most likely prospects demonstrate **linkage** (connection to the cause, mission or leadership); **interest** (care about the cause or mission); and **ability** (have the means to make a gift). NASAA considers everyone in the state arts agency field—about 3,000 people—to be a potential supporter. Solicitations look to engage:

- state arts agency chairs and council members
- state arts agency staff members
- former council members
- former executive directors
- former NASAA board members
- other prospects suggested by staff, board and development committee members

### ***When***

NASAA raises money from individuals year-round, although the majority of giving happens as a result of large campaigns, usually in the spring and fall. People also give when they have a direct experience with NASAA, such as during a conference or after a NASAA staff member visits their state.

### ***How***

Campaigns are conducted by letter, e-mail, social media and personal phone calls. NASAA's leadership is integral to these efforts. Board and development committee members personally thank donors and ask them to give through hand-written notes, phone calls, and in-person at council meetings. Members also help NASAA craft messages for our solicitation materials. They also suggest individual prospects and help NASAA cultivate these donor relationships.

## **RESULTS**

From 2010-2020, the annual fund raised \$767,665 in individual contributions. Since its launch, the annual fund has seen a *230% increase* in dollars raised, and a *135% increase* in number of donors. This success demonstrates how much individual donors regard NASAA's work and have helped us make a stronger case for federal and private support.

## INDIVIDUAL GIVING TO NASAA 2010 – 2020

