

Performance Measurement and Evaluation Framework

*Approved by the NASAA Planning & Budget Committee
July 2023*

Why does NASAA conduct performance measurement and evaluation?

NASAA engages in performance measurement for a variety of reasons, including our desire to:

- **Demonstrate transparency and accountability for being a well-managed organization.** Most professional associations track basic metrics relating to their membership, budget and operations. NASAA does this through our [performance metrics](#) dashboard.
- **Inform action planning and the design, delivery and improvement of services to state arts agencies.** Feedback on member needs shapes the priorities in NASAA's [action plans](#) and helps us originate new services. We also conduct targeted [program evaluations](#) of specific programs/functions. These evaluations help us attune our offerings to member needs.
- **Provide pathways for member input in shaping NASAA's work.** Ongoing consultation not only gives NASAA's work good aim, it contributes to a sense of member ownership. In addition to the substance of what we learn from members, the larger process of asking state arts agencies for feedback is important to members and is part of NASAA's organizational culture. Annual [field interviews](#) conducted by the Nominating Committee embody this practice.
- **Address National Endowment for the Arts expectations.** Every three years NASAA applies to the NEA for our National Services (Partnership Agreement) grant. The adjudication criteria for that award include consideration of, "metrics and/or other relevant information used to monitor the organization's progress."

What principles inform NASAA's approach?

There are many schools of thought on what makes a good performance metric. NASAA generally aims for indicators that are **relevant to member/stakeholder satisfaction** and are reasonably **efficient to collect**, to minimize survey burden on state arts agencies. This is

sometimes a tough balancing act, since nuanced and useful information inevitably requires time for members to supply.

NASAA researches many facets of state arts agency strength: appropriations, staffing, policy and programming. But we don't use these data points as metrics. Rather, our typical practice is to measure things that fall **within NASAA's sphere of influence**.

Transparency is a core value that undergirds our measurement strategies. Multiple committees—including Planning & Budget, Nominating and Governance—review and use the results. Findings are shared publicly with the board and membership and are fully [accessible via the NASAA website](#).

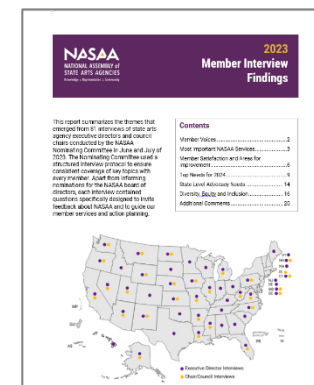
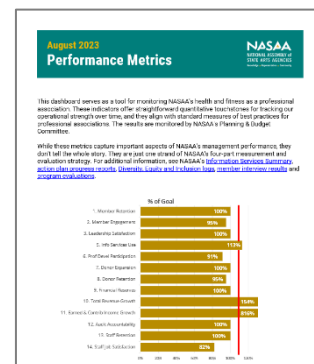
As we meet these multiple measurement needs, NASAA strives to **right-size** the time spent on evaluation activities. While we have a strong commitment to continual improvement, we also know that state arts agencies want NASAA to focus on member assistance. Delivery of services takes priority.

What measurement mechanisms does NASAA employ?

Each evaluation method has its own advantages and disadvantages and yields distinct kinds of information. Rather than adopting one single set of metrics, NASAA has adopted a four-part "portfolio" approach.

#1 – Performance Metrics: These indicators serve as a dashboard for monitoring NASAA's general fitness as a professional association. They offer straightforward quantitative touchstones for tracking our operational strength, and they align with standard measures of best practices for professional associations. Information is relatively simple to harvest from existing information sources.

#2 – Member Interviews: The Nominating Committee conducts peer interviews of every state arts agency chair and executive director each summer, to seek nominations for the NASAA board. The Planning & Budget Committee piggybacks on this field outreach to ask questions about satisfaction with NASAA, most/least valuable services, member needs and emerging issues. Information is collected through a structured interview protocol. The resulting [treasure-trove of qualitative data](#) informs action plan priorities and helps NASAA adapt our services to current state arts agency needs. Starting in the summer of 2024, NASAA intends to broaden the pool of individuals interviewed to include state arts agency deputy directors. Many deputies are highly familiar with NASAA services and are in a good position to provide insightful feedback. This expansion also will diversify the perspectives captured via the interviews.



#3 – Membership Polling: From time to time, NASAA has conducted membership opinion polls. These surveys invite members to rate NASAA's performance and responsiveness. They also gather information about the impact of NASAA's work and how we are fulfilling our mission. They have been conducted intermittently, in conjunction with strategic planning. Starting in 2025, NASAA will systematize the practice of membership opinion polling every other year. While we are cautious about adding another survey to everyone's docket, we believe this move is useful from an equity perspective, as it would help NASAA to further broaden and diversify member input. We are working in consultation with NASAA's Planning & Budget Committee to design questions that are valuable for NASAA's volunteer leaders as well as our management staff.

#4 – Targeted Program Evaluations: NASAA routinely conducts evaluations of our professional development programs, research services and special initiatives. Methods vary, but the common purpose of program evaluations is to support program planning and service improvements. For recent examples, see our evaluations of the [Assembly 2022 conference](#) and the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative. (See the [reflections report](#) and the evaluation [executive summary](#).) We're selective about this work, evaluating a small number of activities each year.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI): All four tracks offer opportunities to measure and monitor NASAA's progress in the DEI realm. In 2023 and 2024, NASAA is undertaking a comprehensive organizational equity audit with Team Dynamics. That process will facilitate NASAA's development of an equity action plan that will include decisions about how we will measure progress toward our DEI goals. We anticipate this work to come to fruition in early 2024, and we'll adjust our measures and feedback loops accordingly. In the meantime, NASAA's [DEI policy](#) guides our actions and our DEI accomplishments are reported in our [current year](#) and [archive](#) logs.