


Your gift *makes such a difference*—just look at these **accomplishments** from the past year! Support from individuals like you strengthens NASAA's work and makes all this possible. A strong NASAA helps state arts agencies *thrive*—now and in the future. **Thank you!**

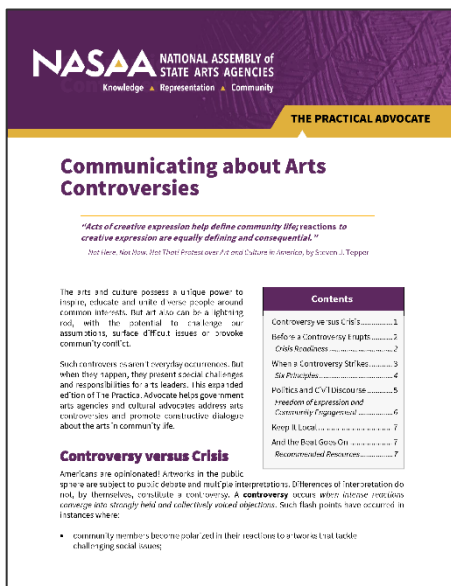
ADVOCACY

To position arts and creativity as a worthwhile and necessary use of public funds, NASAA:

- Focused on **cross-sector government partnerships**—working with the NEA and Mellon Foundation to identify new collaboration opportunities, and publishing the [Arts in Transportation Strategy Sampler](#).
- Equipped arts advocates with [message frameworks](#) that resonate across the political spectrum and refreshed advocacy tools like The Practical Advocate: [Communicating about Arts Controversies](#).
- [Mapped](#) public funding for the arts by both federal and state legislative districts—to help you show the return on investment of the arts.
- Analyzed and reported on [state legislation](#) affecting the arts—everything from the creative economy and public art to ongoing relief efforts for the creative sector.



NASAA helped get a \$27 million increase for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—
the eighth consecutive year of more funding for the NEA and the largest increase in 11 years!



NASAA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of STATE ARTS AGENCIES
Knowledge • Representation • Community

THE PRACTICAL ADVOCATE

Communicating about Arts Controversies

"Acts of creative expression help define community life; reactions to creative expression are equally defining and consequential."
—Jill Allen, "Not Now, Not Their Problem" over Art and Culture in America, by Susan J. Topper

The arts and culture possess a unique power to inspire, educate and unite diverse people around common interests. But art also can be a lightning rod, with the potential to challenge our assumptions, to face difficult issues of "bovine coexistence" or conflict.

Such controversies aren't evenly distributed. But when they happen, they present social challenges and responsibilities for its leaders. This expanded edition of The Practical Advocate helps government arts agencies and cultural advocates address arts controversies and promote constructive dialogue about the arts in community life.

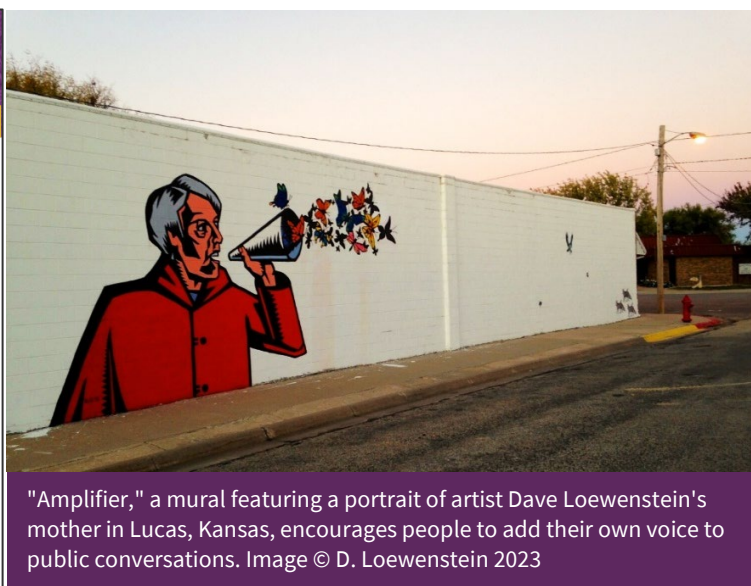
Controversy versus Crisis

Americans are opinionated! Artworks in the public sphere are subject to public debate and multiple interpretations. Differences of interpretation do not, by themselves, constitute a controversy. A **controversy** occurs when diverse reactions converge into strongly held and culturally valued objections. Such flash points have occurred in instances where:

- consensus by members become polarized in their reactions to a controversialist tackle challenging social issues;

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"Amplifier," a mural featuring a portrait of artist Dave Loewenstein's mother in Lucas, Kansas, encourages people to add their own voice to public conversations. Image © D. Loewenstein 2023

EQUITY

To reduce bias and barriers, NASAA:

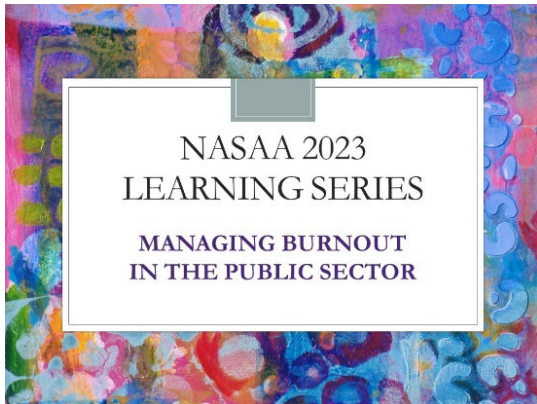
- Launched [Strengthening State Arts Agency Relationships with Native Communities](#) to develop and deepen relationships with Indigenous artists, Native organizations and tribal governments.
- Led the **Equitable Grant-Making Assessment Initiative** in Illinois.
- Retooled the [Visualizing Equity in Grant Making](#) service suite, adding data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Social Vulnerability Index.

NASAA worked to advance equity internally:

- ▶ Launched an **Equity Audit** engaging the staff, board and membership
- ▶ Completed a **board demographics survey** to gain deeper insight into the backgrounds of current leadership
- ▶ Did an **accessibility audit** of the NASAA website
- ▶ Tracked and reported [DEI activities and achievements](#)

RESILIENCY AND COMMUNITY

Through NASAA, state arts agencies fostered resilience and learned from and with each other:



- NASAA supported **states and jurisdictions affected by disasters** and circulated best practices in emergency readiness, recovery and resilience.
- Answered hundreds of [information requests](#); provided customized technical assistance, research, analysis and training; and onboarded new executive directors.
- [NASAA's Learning Series](#) offered **FREE online learning** sessions on advocacy, creative aging, arts education, staff burnout, rural development and more.
- Expanded supportive affinity group offerings to include a **new series of virtual meetings for chairs and council members** to share information and foster connection.

This is just a snapshot of NASAA's fiscal year 2023 accomplishments. See our [2023 Action Plan Highlights](#) for a full list of all we achieved.

Want to help move our work forward? Please [donate today](#) to ensure state arts agencies get the support they need in the year ahead. **Thank you!**