

## NASAA Deputy Directors Meeting Summary - September 17, 2025

### Overview

Deputy Directors provided updates from their states, discussed current challenges and shared about their arts and health work. Natalie Petersen (Deputy Director, Utah Division of Arts & Museums) presented and led discussion on succession planning practices.

Common challenges:

- Ongoing political and funding uncertainties.
- Compliance challenges from changing federal and state restrictions.

### Arts, Health and Wellness Initiatives

Many state arts agencies are using NEA funds to advance arts and health partnerships.

Examples:

- Utah: Considering conducting a statewide arts and wellness landscape assessment.
- Maryland: Partnering with Art Pharmacy for social prescribing.
- Massachusetts: Funding health centers for arts-based prescriptions.
- Indiana: Partnering with universities for creative aging research.
- Florida: Longstanding collaboration with UF's Center for Arts in Medicine.
- Colorado: Supporting statewide arts & health convening with Denver Botanic Gardens.
- Pennsylvania: Partnered with hospitals to support creative arts therapists.

States are balancing enthusiasm for arts-in-health expansion with staffing limitations. There's interest in the upcoming convening NASAA is hosting in Washington, DC.

### Succession Planning

The presentation and discussion explored how agencies prepare for leadership transitions and prevent loss of institutional knowledge. The recommended framework includes: Assessment (roles), Evaluation (gaps), and Development (training/documentation).

Common Practices:

- Creation of SOPs and desk manuals for key positions.
- Use of video recordings and cross-training to capture tacit knowledge.
- Incremental documentation strategies, such as no-meeting Fridays.
- Board engagement limited to oversight.
- Integration of succession goals into annual staff evaluations.

Most participants cited limited time as the biggest barrier, but stressed the need for transparency, communication, and shared templates across agencies.