

NASAA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of STATE ARTS AGENCIES

Knowledge ▲ Representation ▲ Community

State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers 2025 Professional Development Institute

September 16 – 18, Des Moines, Iowa

Speaker and Artist Bios

(in alphabetical order)



Dontreale Anderson **Cofounder, SEEDS**

Dontreale Anderson, a Des Moines native, is the cofounder and executive director of SEEDS, a nonprofit dedicated to cultural empowerment, creative expression and entrepreneurship. With over 20 years of experience working with youth, he is committed to expanding access to fine arts for young people of color, recognizing its vital role in self-expression and identity. SEEDS fosters representation in the Des Moines arts community by integrating African American history with contemporary BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and/or people of color) culture across various artistic disciplines. Through strategic partnerships, including Ballet Des Moines, SEEDS cultivates the next generation of curators, artists and community leaders while affirming the significance of Black creativity in shaping culture and history.



Kavie Barnes **Program Officer, New York State Council on the Arts**

Kavie Barnes is an arts administrator in the areas of arts education and multidisciplinary arts. Before joining the New York State Council on the Arts, she spent her career as an arts researcher and administrator, working for Brooklyn Arts Council and Brooklyn Community Foundation. Kavie studied contemporary art history at University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and visual arts administration at New York University.



Brant Bollman

Artist, Activist, and Puppet Maker, Uplifting Puppet Co.

Artist, activist and puppet maker Brant Bollman leads Uplifting Puppet Co. from Oskaloosa, Iowa. He designs and performs with giant puppets (which he calls "Uppets") for parades, marches and stage productions, aiming to channel the primordial myth-making spirit of shamans summoning masked dancers around the campfire. "I see myself as a creator of experiences—a wizard of papier-mâché, cardboard and wire," Brant explains. "I create magical

moments, like a ringmaster leading the grand parade at a circus." The ultimate goal of Uplifting Puppet Co. is to unite communities and build culture through the art of theatre and papier-mâché. He also is the director of theatre arts at William Penn University in Oskaloosa, where he teaches creative arts and new media courses, directs plays, and creates giant lighted puppets for the town's annual holiday spectacular, The Oskaloosa Lighted Christmas Parade.



Matthew Boyce

Arts in Education Program Manager, Arkansas Arts Council

Born and raised in New Jersey, Matt Boyce is a composer, musician and professional tap dancer/choreographer. Matt began studying piano at the age of three, and went on to study music at Montclair State University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in music. Matt has also studied and performed the art of tap dance since the age of 10. After making his professional dance industry debut at the age of 12, he went on to perform in national tours as well as teach

and choreograph nationally. Matt currently resides in Little Rock, Arkansas with his wife and two fur-children.



Deann DeGroot

Executive Director of the Mahaska Chamber & Development Group

A native of Oskaloosa, Deann De Groot graduated from Pella Christian High School, attended Dordt University and earned her degree from Iowa State University in business marketing. Deann has been at the chamber since graduating in 2011 and has deeply committed to the chamber's initiatives aimed at promoting economic growth

and community development in Mahaska County for over 14 years. Deann enjoys spending time with her family on the farm and is involved in many activities and committees at her church and school.



Jennifer Drinkwater
Extension Community Art Specialist and Associate Professor, Iowa State University

Jennifer Drinkwater is an artist, associate professor of art and visual culture, and community arts specialist for extension and outreach at Iowa State University. Jennifer explores how we bring artwork from the studio into the world, and how art making can both build and shape community. Over the years, she's created installations in restored prairies in Nebraska; collaborated on public art projects in vacant sites on Iowa main streets; spearheaded a community knit-bombing project; painted murals with middle school children on a juke joint in the Mississippi Delta and in Perry, Iowa; and written free toolkits about these projects. Jennifer is the creator of The What's Good Project, which celebrates the meaningful stories from where we live through community conversations and painting. Although she spent one year of her life living in tents, Jennifer currently resides in Ames, Iowa.



Mike Fisher
Superintendent, Oskaloosa Schools

Mike Fisher formerly served as the director of secondary bands and coordinator of instrumental music at West Marshall Community Schools, a position he held from 2006-2012. His duties included teaching all high school bands and lessons as well as coteaching middle school ensembles. In addition, he was responsible for all administrative and coordinating duties for the instrumental music department. He has also served as a building and district leader with Waterloo and Charles City Schools. A native of Oskaloosa and alum of the Band of the 90's, Mike earned his bachelor of music education from Simpson College with an emphasis in saxophone. He also holds advanced degrees in leadership from the University of Northern Iowa. He lives in Oskaloosa with his wife, Sarah (who he met in high school band), son, Joshua and daughter, Anna.



Jerome Grande
Program Director, Illinois Arts Council

At the Illinois Arts Council (IAC), Jerome Grande oversees the Arts and Foreign Language Education Grant Program, a partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Arts-in-Education Program Grants, the Short-Term Artists Residency program, and the Summer Youth Employment in the Arts program. Before that, Jerome was a consultant for education and strategic initiatives at IAC. He was a planning team member on the National Endowment for the Arts Education Leaders Institute, a writing team member and operations manager for

the agency's strategic plan, and committee member on the Illinois Arts Education Advisory Committee. Jerome grew up in France and has lived many years in the Midwest. He has a dual background in arts administration and visual arts. He has advised and designed for arts and education groups in Chicago, taught color theory courses, lectured on international cultural policy, and participated in the curatorial development of exhibitions and projects for museums and art centers. Jerome earned a BFA from Indiana University and an MA in design studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and likes to watercolor.



Christine Her
Executive Director, ArtForce Iowa

Christine Her is the daughter of Hmong refugee parents from Laos. She graduated from East High School and pursued her BA at Drake University, studying creative writing, philosophy and political science. She currently serves as the executive director of ArtForce Iowa, a nonprofit with a mission to transform youth in need through art. Christine is a cultural architect who is highly motivated to interrupt social and systemic injustices with hope and art while

helping others rise in their own power and lean into their purpose.



Reilly Jensen
Arts Education Program Manager, Utah Division of Arts & Museums

Reilly Jensen joined the Utah Division of Arts & Museums in 2022. Reilly is an arts educator, teaching artist and archaeologist with a special focus on community and heritage collaboration projects. She has an MFA from the Community Based Arts Education program at the University of Utah, an MA in Middle Eastern studies, and a BS in anthropology. Her research interests include social practice;

the construction of knowledge, meaning and memory; and the potential of cross-disciplinary learning. Reilly has taught object based ontology, community education and visual arts in the field and in classrooms across Utah, the Great Basin and at UNESCO World Heritage Sites internationally.



Seso Martenes
Artist, Mainframe Studios

A native of Des Moines, Seso Martenes is a driven artist and cultural advocate, rooted in a unique blend of Midwestern upbringing and Mexican heritage. His work embodies Chicanismo as a living practice—a testament to cultural consciousness, identity and political ideology deeply connected to the Chicano community. Committed to amplifying his culture's story and preserving its history—

particularly in Iowa, where the Mexican/Latino presence spans over a century—Seso actively challenges harmful stereotypes. His mission is to dismantle limiting perceptions of the community as merely "hardworking builders" or "criminals," instead highlighting its members as survivors, artisans, creators and dreamers with limitless potential. His proactive engagement, reflected in a robust schedule of exhibitions, awards and speaking engagements in 2025, underscores his dedication to treating artists as "rock stars" and fostering a vibrant, recognized artistic landscape.



Andy and Allison McGuire
George Daily Auditorium

Andy and Allison McGuire help operate the George Daily Community Auditorium in Oskaloosa, Iowa. For the past 10 years, they've been working with the community's arts and culture sector to help grow the community's creative ecosystem and the economic impact of the arts to benefit the entire region. They've made it their goal to be a part of a community in which they can participate. They have found that if you give more than you take, work together, make everything count and share what you can, a lot of little can build an awful lot.



Kristen McMains
Talent Outreach Specialist, Musco Lighting

Kristen McMains is dedicated to building bridges between education and industry, ensuring meaningful career development across all demographics. After earning her BS in human services from Iowa State University, she dove head-first into the world of employability and workforce strategy. After 10 years of professional work, Kristen headed back to school and obtained her master's degree from William Penn University. Kristen's career spans the nonprofit sector, federal grants and higher education—culminating in her current role at Musco Lighting as talent outreach specialist, where she connects learners from K-12 through college with real-world career pathways. She thrives on helping community members discover how today's learning leads to tomorrow's opportunities. Beyond her professional endeavors, Kristen is deeply rooted in Oskaloosa life. Together with her husband, she co-owns Full Bloom Brewhouse—a unique brewhouse focused on connecting craft, community and creativity. Her love for the arts shines through the live performances hosted in their taproom and in celebrating her children's creative ventures—her son's entrepreneurial art business, Willy J's Creations, and her daughter's dance pursuits.



Akwi Nji

Artist; Founder, Ampersand

Akwi Nji is an interdisciplinary artist whose paintings explore themes of resilience, belonging and the places we call home. Her practice—rooted in painting, mixed media, and performance—offers bold, emotive works that invite personal reflection and collective connection. Drawing inspiration from nature, personal narrative and ancestral memory, her paintings speak to transition, empowerment and transformation. Akwi is the recipient of the Iowa

Governor's Emerging Arts Leader Award, the Iowa Book Prize, the Iowa Music Awards Poet of the Year honor and a fellowship from the Iowa Arts Council. Her work is held in private and commercial collections across the United States and by a growing global community of collectors. As founder of Ampersand, a creative studio and communications agency, Akwi has consulted with school districts, municipalities and organizations to elevate the role of the arts in education and community development. Akwi serves on the boards of BruceMaree and the Iowa Arts Council.



Kaci Norman

Arts in Education Program Manager, Alabama State Council on the Arts

In her role as the arts in education program manager, Kaci Norman oversees the Council's arts education based initiatives and grants programs. Kaci has over 15 years of experience in the museum education and cultural arts fields. She serves on the Alabama Art Educator Association board

and remains active in both museum education and supporting other cultural arts across the state. Originally from Colorado, Kaci made her way across the country, making stops in Oklahoma and Florida long enough to pick up degrees in education and arts administration and finally landing in Alabama with short pit stops in Georgia, Kansas and Arkansas. Her transition from "front of house" teaching to "behind the scenes" supporter of others' teaching came at the perfect time and her cup is continually filled. She and her husband are now settled in Montgomery and are proud to call it home.



Amanda Noyes

Arts Learning and Accessibility Director, South Carolina Arts Commission

Amanda Noyes has a background as an art therapist and holds a bachelor's degree in fine art and psychology from Hope College and a master's in art therapy from the School of Visual Arts. Before joining the South Carolina Arts Commission, Amanda served as a disability resource coordinator at the University of South Carolina. In Amanda's role at the Arts Commission, she works closely

with educators and arts organizations to increase accessibility in the arts sector and arts education.



Joseph Parrish
Co-Founder and Executive Director, Adventures in Social Development

Joseph Parrish has a BA in human services from Grand View University. He completed Board Certified Behavior Analyst® coursework in applied behavior analysis and created role-play theatre analysis programs. Joe conducts social drumming sessions for Adventures in Social Development, whose mission is to empower neurodivergent individuals through performance based learning to teach social skills.



Christina Smith
President and CEO, Community Support Advocates

Christina Smith has over 33 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities or mental health conditions, 25 years as an executive and 15 years as CEO. Christina has a passion for building organizational culture, particularly during times of transformative change. She graduated from Iowa State University, the Greater Des Moines Leadership Academy's Transformation Leadership Program, From Vision to Action Leadership Academy and Goldman Sach's 10,000 Small Businesses entrepreneurial program. Under Christina's leadership, Community Support Advocates has been named a top Iowa workplace for the past 14 years, based on the engagement level of employees compared to other businesses of similar size in the state. Community Support Advocates provides a continuum of community based mental health and disability services, from birth to death.

continued

2025 Arts Education Working Group

(in alphabetical order)



Matthew Anderson

Midwest Region Representative

Arts in Education Director, North Dakota Council on the Arts

Matthew B. Anderson is an experienced and passionate arts educator who believes in the transformative power of arts education. With a master's degree in fine art from the University of North Dakota and over 15 years of experience in the field, he is committed to advocating for and promoting the importance of arts education for all learners. In his role at the North Dakota Council on the Arts, Matthew works closely with educators and community leaders to provide high-quality arts education programs that enhance the lives of every student in North Dakota and build stronger communities. He firmly believes that arts education is essential to a community's overall health and well-being, allowing individuals to explore and express their ideas, connect with others, and develop critical thinking and problem solving skills—skills that are fundamental for success in life. He has witnessed how communities come together to celebrate the arts, creating lively and dynamic cultural scenes that attract visitors from all over the world. As a proud North Dakotan, Matthew understands the importance of community and the role that the arts can play in bringing people together. When he's not advocating for arts education, he enjoys hiking and biking in the great outdoors, drawing inspiration from the natural beauty of the state he calls home.



Samantha Clarke

Mid-Atlantic Representative, Cochair

Program Officer, Arts Education & Lifelong Learning, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Samantha Clarke is a multifaceted arts administrator, storyteller and educator. She earned a BFA in acting from the University of the Arts and an MA in text and performance from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and the University of London, Birkbeck. Samantha worked as an actor, teaching artist, theatre director and arts administrator throughout Greater Philadelphia. In addition, she taught and directed at Montgomery County Community College and Penn State University (Berks) for over five years before moving her career to New Jersey. She worked closely with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts beginning in 2019, when she managed the Artists in Education Residency Grant Program with program partner Young Audiences Arts for Learning NJ and Eastern PA. In tandem with Young Audiences and the state arts council, Samantha developed and launched the Arts Professional Learning Institute, the state's professional learning program for teaching artists and classroom educators. In 2021, she joined the state arts council as the program officer for arts education and lifelong learning. Through this position, she's been able to develop and manage communities of practice and

professional learning for teaching artists and arts education administrators, as well as developing programs that directly serve the state's most isolated and under-resourced populations, including older adults and systems-impacted youth. She is an aspiring writer, a wannabe baker, an avid tea drinker, a chicken finger connoisseur and a loving dog mom.



Nancy Daugherty
NEA Liaison

Arts Education Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts

Nancy Daugherty has been an arts education specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since June 2000. Through the agency's arts education program, she has worked with applicants in all arts fields and disciplines, and is currently focused in the disciplines of dance, literature, theatre and musical theatre. She also advises the Arts Education Working Group, which designs professional development for state arts agency arts education managers; serves on the Advisory Committee of the Arts Education Partnership; and serves on the intergovernmental team that manages the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards. From 2004 through 2007, Nancy managed the NEA's Summer Schools in the Arts program, a national initiative designed to assess student learning and offer potential models of rigorous, standards based arts education. Prior to her federal service, she was the arts education coordinator for the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, where she also served as the coordinator for the Governor's Task Force on Arts in Basic Education. For the Center for Economic Options, Nancy developed training and marketing opportunities for sector-specific microenterprise networks such as the Appalachian Flower Network. She has served as a facilitator, presenter, consultant, panelist and conference planner for many state and national arts organizations. Nancy is a graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in sociology and anthropology.



Jennie Knoebel
Midwest Region Representative, Site Host

Senior Grants and Programs Manager, Iowa Arts Council

Jennie Knoebel currently oversees project and operating support grants and arts learning initiatives at the Iowa Arts Council. She also leads and organizes statewide professional development programs, including the Iowa Regional Arts Forums, Iowa Arts and Fine Arts Education Summits, and the Iowa Culture Leadership Cohort program. Knoebel has been with the agency since 2016. Prior to that position, she was the executive director of Austin Area Arts in Austin, Minnesota, and the communications coordinator for the University of Minnesota Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Jennie has an MLS degree with a focus in arts administration from the University of Minnesota and a BA in theatre arts and communication studies from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.



Tamar Krames (she/her)
Western Region Representative
Arts in Education Program Manager, Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA)

Tamar Krames joined ArtsWA in 2019 as an artist, educator and facilitator. She has taught high school as a certified teacher and supported preservice teachers and educators across Washington state as an instructional coach focused on language, literacy and culture. Tamar now oversees projects that expand arts and cultural learning opportunities for students, teaching artists and classroom teachers working in any artistic discipline. Current projects include managing arts in education grants, supporting collective work for equitable access to arts education, codirecting the Washington State Teaching Artist Training Lab, and amplifying the creative practices of youth and educators. Tamar holds a master in teaching degree from The Evergreen State College and a bachelor of fine arts degree from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is still in touch with her high school art teacher through mailed postcards and drawings.



Meghan McFerrin
NASAA Liaison
Arts Education Project Manager, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Meghan McFerrin coordinates NASAA's professional development services for state and jurisdictional arts agency arts education staff. Meghan is an arts educator with experience teaching in K-12 classrooms as well as in higher education, museum and community arts settings. From 2017 to 2022, she worked for the Georgia Department of Education where she oversaw the state's STEAM certification program and built a statewide community arts network to support arts integration in schools. As a museum educator at the High Museum of Art, she developed and facilitated programs for K-12 students and teachers, including a Kennedy Center Museum Access for Kids grant project focused on accessibility and differentiated instruction for students with disabilities. Later, returning as a teaching artist at the museum, she expanded her work to include creative aging, designing programs for adult and senior audiences. Meghan teaches preservice art educators as an adjunct instructor at Capital University and is a graduate associate and PhD student in The Ohio State University's Department of Arts Administration, Education, and Policy, specializing in museum education and administration. Meghan's personal passion for the arts is evident in her work as a visual artist and a potter.



Kimberly Washburn Motte
Southern Region Representative, Chair
Arts Education Director, South Carolina Arts Commission

As a certified visual arts teacher and former museum educator, Kimberly Washburn Motte's passion for education in and through the arts drives her work for statewide equitable access to arts learning opportunities across the age spectrum. Kimberly is the 2021 South Carolina Art Education Association Museum Educator

of the Year.



Martha Piscuskas
New England Region Representative
Program Director, Maine Arts Commission

Martha Piscuskas is a visual artist with over 30 years of nonprofit organizational leadership alongside a deep understanding of Maine's communities and culture. Before joining the Maine Arts Commission in 2019, she was executive director at Waterfall Arts, a community arts center in coastal Belfast that she cofounded in 2000. There she curated and organized all arts learning opportunities, exhibitions and events. One of five artist siblings

with parents in secondary education, Martha grew up immersed in active creative inquiry. In addition to serving on her local school board, she has led and founded numerous organizations, including community funds MaineShare and Maine Initiatives, and the Maine Center on Economic Policy. Martha has presented nationally and served on multiple regional, state and local boards. She was the executive director of several statewide organizations focusing on community resilience and empowerment. She holds a BA in cultural anthropology from Wesleyan University and a BFA from the Maine College of Art & Design. Martha lives on a homesteading solar-run farm with her family and gets out hiking and lake paddling whenever possible.



Danica (Nikki) Rosengren
Western Region Representative
Arts Education Specialist, Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts

Nikki Rosengren (she/her) began her work as the arts education specialist at the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) in 2020. At SFCA, Nikki oversees the Artists in the Schools Program, the ARTS FIRST Partners and the Artistic Teaching Partner Roster; she is also constantly creating and

supporting new initiatives in the arts education field. Nikki works closely with Capitol Modern: Hawai'i State Art Museum (a museum run by SFCA) to develop programming and immersive exhibits geared toward young people and their adults. Over the past two years, Nikki developed a partnership with Capitol Modern and Honolulu Theatre for Youth to create sensory art installations in the museum that also house theatre performances for neurodivergent young people. These installations and performances

then transform into preschool shows that tour statewide. This past year, Nikki has focused as well on arts and healing initiatives post Lāhainā fires, and became a Trauma Informed Arts Administrator through the Bartol Foundation. In addition to her work for the state, she is an arts education consultant, and created a variety of professional development modules on integrating the arts into health curricula, as well as spectacle based education. Nikki grew up on Lenni Lenape land (New Jersey) and then went west to pursue theatre at Northwestern University, followed by an MFA in theatre for youth at Arizona State University. When not at work, you will probably find her on a trail, surfing, doing menstruation advocacy work or trying a new craft.



Jenni Ryan

Mid-America Region Representative

Arts Education Program Specialist, Missouri Arts Council

Jenni Ryan joined the Missouri Arts Council (MAC) in September 2022 as the arts education program specialist. Before coming to MAC, she worked in both the education and theatre sectors, as an actor and an English and theatre teacher. Jenni spent many years teaching grammar, writing and literature; directing plays and musicals; and fostering a love of learning in (mostly) teenagers. As an actor and theatre person, she has been able to make a lot of art and share a wide range of stories with audiences. Now at MAC, Jenni continues to champion the arts and artists of Missouri through the arts education programs MAC supports. She is the new state coordinator of Poetry Out Loud, and she is developing a network of A+ Schools (a whole-school arts integration model) for the state. Jenni is committed to her belief that the arts are part of any core curriculum, essential for growing big brains, strong bodies and full hearts.