



State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers 2025 Professional Development Institute Evaluation Report

September 16-18 | Des Moines, Iowa

In 2025, state arts agency arts (SAA) education managers gathered for a Professional Development Institute (PDI) in Des Moines, Iowa. The PDI was managed through a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). PDI content was designed and created through a collaborative planning process by a team of representatives from state arts agencies, the NEA and NASAA.

As in past years, an in-depth post-conference evaluation was conducted to solicit participant feedback, assess the success of the event, and inform the planning of future professional development offerings. This evaluation was conducted through an online survey instrument, which all PDI participants were encouraged to complete.

This report highlights the results of the survey, including cross-tabulations by key respondent characteristic (type of respondent and tenure). It includes verbatim responses to all open-ended questions. Tabulations and comments below reflect feedback from the 31 PDI attendees who participated in the evaluation.

1. PDI Participants and Responses

Number of PDI Participants = 46
Number of states represented = 37
Number of SAA participants = 41
Number of national partners and other participants = 5
Total number of evaluations returned = 34
Number of SAA respondents = 31

SAA response rate = 76%

The results included in this evaluation report reflect response from State Arts Agency participants.

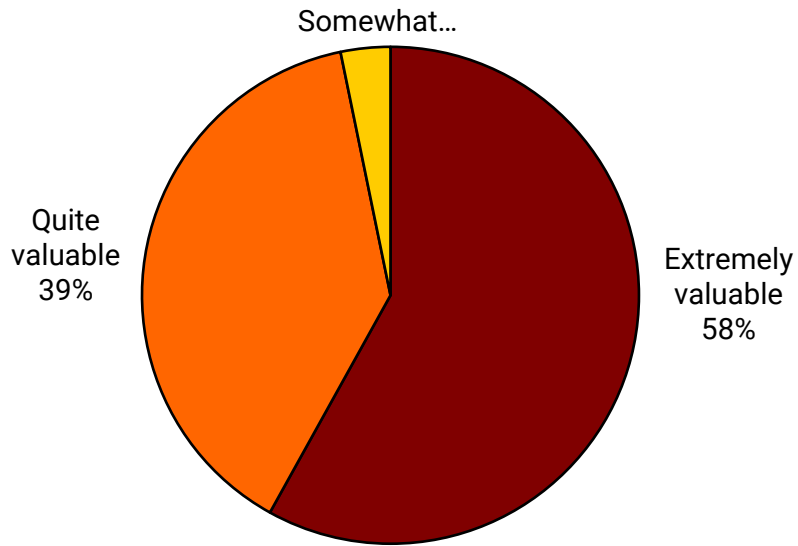
2. Position Tenure of SAA Respondents

Position Tenure	No. of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Fewer than two years	8	26%
2-5 years	15	48%
6-9 years	4	13%
10-14 years	3	10%
15 or more years	1	3%
Total	31	100%

3. Including this year, how many times have SAA respondents you attended the Professional Development Institute?

This is my first one	23% (7)
2-5	57% (17)
6-10	17% (5)
More than 10	3% (1)
No Answer	1

4. Overall, how would you characterize the 2025 Professional Development Institute?



Ratings represent responses on a five-point scale.
 No respondents rated the PDI as “Not at all valuable” or “Slightly valuable.”

Usefulness Rating by Position Tenure Category
 (1 = Not at all valuable; 5 = Extremely valuable)

Position Tenure	Average Characterization
Fewer than two years	4.6 (8)
2-5 years	4.6 (15)
6-9 years	4.3 (4)
10-14 years	4.7 (3)
15 or more years	4.0 (1)
All respondents	4.5 (31)

5. Did you have the opportunity to review the pre-conference materials?

I reviewed some of the materials	65% (20)
I reviewed all of the materials	29% (9)
I reviewed none of the materials	6% (2)

6. If you were able to review some or all of the pre-conference materials, did you find them helpful?

Somewhat helpful	6% (2)
Helpful	39% (12)
Very helpful	48% (15)
No opinion	6% (2)

7. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about the 2025 PDI.

1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Average (opinions and participants)
The 2025 PDI had a positive impact on my own learning.	0%	0%	3% (1)	32% (10)	65% (20)	4.6
I was able to engage in meaningful conversations with peers.	0%	0%	3% (1)	16% (5)	81% (25)	4.8
The 2025 PDI deepened my understanding of how arts education cultivates transferable, creative, and technical skills.	0%	3% (1)	10% (3)	48% (15)	39% (12)	4.2
I learned ways rural communities leverage their unique strengths to design impactful arts education programs.	0%	3% (1)	6% (2)	42% (13)	48% (15)	4.4
I identified new models and frameworks that inform my work as an arts education manager.	0%	0%	16% (5)	35% (11)	48% (15)	4.3
The PDI helped me reflect on my role as a leader within my agency and community.	0%	0%	0%	32% (10)	68% (21)	4.7
I found the learnings from the 2025 PDI applicable to my own state or jurisdiction.	0%	0%	10% (3)	39% (12)	52% (16)	4.4

Agreement by Respondent Tenure

1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree
Calculations represent average ratings within each tenure category.

Statement	Fewer than 2 years	2-5 years	6-9 years	10-14 years	15 or more years	Average (opinions and participants)
The 2025 PDI had a positive impact on my own learning.	4.9	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.0	4.6
I was able to engage in meaningful conversations with peers.	4.9	4.8	4.3	5.0	5.0	4.8
The 2025 PDI deepened my understanding of how arts education cultivates transferable, creative, and technical skills.	4.6	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.2
I learned ways rural communities leverage their unique strengths to design impactful arts education programs.	4.5	4.4	3.8	4.7	4.0	4.4
I identified new models and frameworks that inform my work as an arts education manager.	4.4	4.3	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.3
The PDI helped me reflect on my role as a leader within my agency and community.	4.8	4.7	4.5	5.0	4.0	4.7
I found the learnings from the 2025 PDI applicable to my own state or jurisdiction.	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.0	4.4

8. How would you rate the amount of time allotted to each of the following?

1 = Wishing much LESS time had been allocated
 3 = About the right time was allocated
 5 = Wishing much MORE time had been allocated

Features and Events	1	2	3	4	5	No Opinion / Did not participate
Panel Discussions featuring External Speakers	0%	0%	94% (29)	6% (2)	0%	0%
Lecture-Style Presentations led by External Speakers	0%	19% (6)	81% (25)	0%	0%	0%
Hands-on Workshops led by External Speakers	0%	0%	55% (17)	39% (12)	3% (1)	3% (1)
Peer Group Team Building Sessions led by Peers	0%	0%	74% (23)	19% (6)	3% (1)	3% (1)
Presentations led by Peers	0%	0%	65% (20)	29% (9)	3% (1)	3% (1)
Small Group Work and Discussions	0%	6% (2)	61% (19)	32% (10)	0%	0%
Energizer Activities led by Peers	0%	16% (5)	68% (21)	10% (3)	0%	6% (2)
Time for Personal Reflection	0%	0%	77% (24)	23% (7)	0%	0%
Rest & Unstructured Time	0%	0%	90% (28)	10% (3)	0%	0%
Immersive Experiences in Local Spaces	0%	0%	55% (17)	32% (10)	10% (3)	3% (1)

Time Allocation by Respondent Tenure

1 = Wishing much LESS time had been allocated

3 = About the right time was allocated

5 = Wishing much MORE time had been allocated

Calculations represent average ratings within each tenure category.

Statement	Fewer than 2 years	2-5 years	6-9 years	10-14 years	15 or more years	Average (opinions and participants)
Panel Discussions featuring External Speakers	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1
Lecture-Style Presentations led by External Speakers	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.7	3.0	2.8
Hands-on Workshops led by External Speakers	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.7	3.0	3.5
Peer Group Team Building Sessions led by Peers	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.3
Presentations led by Peers	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.0	3.4
Small Group Work and Discussions	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.3
Energizer Activities led by Peers	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.7	0.0	2.9
Time for Personal Reflection	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.7	3.0	3.2
Rest & Unstructured Time	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1
Immersive Experiences in Local Spaces	3.6	3.5	3.3	4.0	3.0	3.5

9. How relevant were each of the following PDI events to your work?

1=Not at all relevant
 3=Moderately relevant
 5=Highly relevant

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	No Opinion / Did not participate	Average (opinions and participants)
Tuesday, September 16: Peer-Group Teambuilding and Introduction Session	0%	6% (2)	3% (1)	39% (12)	48% (15)	3% (1)	4.3
Tuesday, September 16: Des Moines Arts Education Community Panel and Studio Visits	0%	0%	26% (8)	23% (7)	48% (15)	3% (1)	4.2
Tuesday, September 16: Keynote Presentation with Akwi Nji	0%	0%	16% (5)	32% (10)	48% (15)	3% (1)	4.3
Tuesday, September 16: SEEDS Students Performance and Talk-Back Session	0%	3% (1)	29% (9)	32% (10)	29% (9)	6% (2)	3.9
Wednesday, September 17: Oskaloosa Arts Education Panel and Q&A	0%	0%	26% (8)	19% (6)	48% (15)	6% (2)	4.2
Wednesday, September 17: Workshop with Jennifer Drinkwater and Brant Bollman	0%	3% (1)	23% (7)	35% (11)	32% (10)	6% (2)	4.0
Thursday, September 18: State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers' Flashes of Inspiration	0%	3% (1)	0%	16% (5)	65% (20)	16% (5)	4.7
Thursday, September 18: Closing Session with Akwi Nji	0%	0%	23% (7)	45% (14)	16% (5)	16% (5)	3.9

Relevancy Averages by Tenure

1=Not at all relevant
 3=Moderately relevant
 5=Highly relevant

Calculations represent average ratings within each tenure category.

Statement	Fewer than 2 years	2-5 years	6-9 years	10-14 years	15 or more years	Average (opinions and participants)
Tuesday, September 16: Peer-Group Teambuilding and Introduction Session	4.1	4.5	4.3	4.3	0.0	4.3
Tuesday, September 16: Des Moines Arts Education Community Panel and Studio Visits	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3	0.0	4.2
Tuesday, September 16: Keynote Presentation with Akwi Nji	4.1	4.5	3.8	5.0	0.0	4.3
Tuesday, September 16: SEEDS Students Performance and Talk-Back Session	3.9	4.1	3.5	4.0	0.0	3.9
Wednesday, September 17: Oskaloosa Arts Education Panel and Q&A	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.3	0.0	4.2
Wednesday, September 17: Workshop with Jennifer Drinkwater and Brant Bollman	4.1	3.8	4.5	4.3	0.0	4.0
Thursday, September 18: State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers' Flashes of Inspiration	4.4	4.8	4.5	5.0	0.0	4.7
Thursday, September 18: Closing Session with Akwi Nji	3.6	4.2	3.5	4.5	0.0	3.9

10. To what extent did the following experiences enhance your overall engagement or sense of connection during the PDI?

1=Not at all
 3= Moderately
 5=Extremely

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	No Opinion / Did not participate	Average (opinions and participants)
Monday, September 15: New Arts Education Managers Dinner	0%	0	6% (2)	3% (1)	19% (6)	71% (22)	4.4
Tuesday, September 16: Networking Breakfast with Conversation Cards	0%	6% (2)	19% (6)	52% (16)	23% (7)	0%	3.9
Tuesday, September 16: Peer-Group Teambuilding and Introduction Session	0%	0%	13% (4)	39% (12)	48% (15)	0%	4.4
Wednesday, September 17: Lunchtime Exploration of Downtown Oskaloosa Arts	0%	3% (1)	23% (7)	42% (13)	23% (7)	10% (3)	3.9
Thursday, September 18: Regional Group Breakfast Meetings	0%	6% (2)	6% (2)	39% (12)	39% (12)	10% (3)	4.2
Daily "Gots and Wants" Activity	0%	10% (3)	19% (6)	39% (12)	29% (9)	3% (1)	3.9

Response Averages by Tenure

1=Not at all
 3=Moderately
 5=Extremely

Calculations represent average ratings within each tenure category.

Statement	Fewer than 2 years	2-5 years	6-9 years	10-14 years	15 or more years	Average (opinions and participants)
Monday, September 15: New Arts Education Managers Dinner	4.7	3.5	5.0	0.0	0.0	4.4
Tuesday, September 16: Networking Breakfast with Conversation Cards	3.9	3.8	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.9
Tuesday, September 16: Peer-Group Teambuilding and Introduction Session	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.0	4.4
Wednesday, September 17: Lunchtime Exploration of Downtown Oskaloosa Arts	3.6	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.9
Thursday, September 18: Regional Group Breakfast Meetings	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2
Daily "Gots and Wants" Activity	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.9

11. Which regularly emerging topics are you most interested in exploring during upcoming peer group learning opportunities?

1= Most interested
7= Least Interested

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No Opinion / Did not participate	Average (opinions and participants)
Supporting Teaching Artists	35% (11)	6% (2)	10% (3)	6% (2)	13% (4)	13% (4)	0%	16% (5)	2.9
Navigating Teaching Artist Rosters	3% (1)	16% (5)	3% (1)	6% (2)	6% (2)	6% (2)	19% (6)	39% (12)	4.5
Grant Management	19% (6)	13% (4)	10% (3)	3% (1)	3% (1)	19% (6)	3% (1)	29% (9)	3.4
Leadership Skill Development	16% (5)	16% (5)	13% (4)	13% (4)	13% (4)	0%	3% (1)	26% (8)	3.0
Program Evaluation	13% (4)	10% (3)	39% (12)	3% (1)	6% (2)	3% (1)	6% (2)	19% (6)	3.2
Reaching Rural Communities	3% (1)	23% (7)	10% (3)	19% (6)	3% (1)	0%	10% (3)	32% (10)	3.5
Arts Education and Workforce Development	10% (3)	16% (5)	6% (2)	19% (6)	10% (3)	0%	0%	39% (12)	3.1
Total Number of participants who ranked up to this number	31	31	28	26	17	13	13		

Number of participants who ranked each topic in their top three:

Supporting Teaching Artists	Navigating Teaching Artist Rosters	Grant Management	Leadership Skill Development	Program Evaluation	Reaching Rural Communities	Arts Education and Workforce Development
16	7	13	14	19	10	10

Response Averages by Tenure

1= Most interested

7= Least Interested

Calculations represent average ratings within each tenure category.

Statement	Fewer than 2 years	2-5 years	6-9 years	10-14 years	15 or more years	Average (opinions and participants)
Supporting Teaching Artists	3.0	3.0	1.0	5.0	1.0	2.9
Navigating Teaching Artist Rosters	4.0	4.9	7.0	4.5	2.0	4.5
Grant Management	3.8	3.2	3.0	4.5	0.0	3.4
Leadership Skill Development	3.8	3.0	3.3	1.0	0.0	3.0
Program Evaluation	3.0	3.5	2.3	3.0	3.0	3.2
Reaching Rural Communities	3.1	4.2	2.0	3.0	0.0	3.5
Arts Education and Workforce Development	3.4	2.9	4.0	2.0	0.0	3.1

In addition to numerical ratings, the 2025 PDI evaluation also solicited requested open-ended comments about respondents' learning experiences and invited suggestions to improve future PDIs. These remarks offer a rich resource of qualitative data to inform professional development planning in 2025 and beyond. Comments shown below are verbatim responses from PDI attendees, lightly edited for clarity.

12. What are your most salient take-aways from the 2025 PDI?

Peer-to-peer learning and community

- There's a wealth of knowledge and experience, plus new perspectives and variety of approaches to what makes arts education in each state/region. Opportunities to listen and learn alongside my peers and in conversation with them helped me understand which strategies are useful where/when and also support them as they navigate their roles with my own state vantage point. [Fewer than two years]
- Being in community with my peer group. [Fewer than two years]
- I am not alone. This is the place I belong. Lean on others as we are all doing similar work [Fewer than two years]
- Learning all the things that other SAA leaders are doing and how they are navigating the current climate was eye opening and gave me some great ideas to springboard my plans for the future. [Fewer than two years]
- Connecting with peers doing similar but sometimes importantly different work was really cool. [Fewer than two years]
- The PDI is so incredibly important and vital to this network. This network is so incredibly important and vital to my work. Without it, I honestly do not know if I would be able to continue in my role. It's the support system that keeps me going and reminds me of the value our work has. [2-5 years]
- I am still so fascinated with what Illinois is doing, as well as the Creative Careers website in SC. It is always so awesome to see what other states are doing and how we can follow their lead/guide our constituents to their work! [2-5 years]
- Though we didn't talk much during programming about POL, it is a source of anxiety, and I appreciated the opportunity to talk with peers informally and during the intro session. [2-5 years]
- The sense of community and how the network can support each other. [2-5 years]
- The strength of connection and community within the SAA Arts Ed peer group. This overwhelming sense of camaraderie and support is the fuel that keeps me going in this work during difficult times. [2-5 years]
- Valuing the support we give and take from colleagues and the importance of the support from NASAA and NEA. Recognizing the how different and yet how similar our work can be in this role. [2-5 years]
- This peer group is essential to my work. The folks that end up in these very specific roles are uniquely able to challenge my thinking and push my work forward. Because this peer group is among the only folks that truly understand the opportunities and barriers related to this job, I am able to (especially over the years) let down my guard and truly change practices in service of students, educators, and families in my state. [6-9 years]
- I enjoyed the opportunity to have the same small group members throughout the PDI. It gave me a chance to get to know a few people better and have deeper conversations. [6-9 years]
- I LOVED the four corners activity to get a quick glimpse of people to follow up with later regarding specific topics. [10-14 years]
- We're in this together. [15 or more years]

Partnerships, Trust, and Relationship Building

- Innovative collaborations that can support your work. [Fewer than two years]
- Tips on relationship-building and more intentionality in building trust [Fewer than two years]
- It really is about the right people at the right time. Who all share a common mission and vision for the advancement of the arts both in education and the local community. [Fewer than two years]
- Partnerships, community involvement, and time in town in Oskaloosa. Idea of “vision culture” from Oskaloosa superintendent Mike Fisher. [2-5 years]
- The trip to Oskaloosa was great. I really enjoyed the session at William Penn. That session with the Community Building model was a great framework and may be the biggest takeaway that I'll be sharing with my colleagues. [2-5 years]
- The importance of connection and relationship building to make a lasting impact! [2-5 years]
- Recognizing the collective impact we have with our SAAs, constituents and Arts Education field. [2-5 years]
- This conference and peer group is so energizing. My main takeaways from the sessions include the importance of relationship building and trust, the power of partnerships, and the community building framework. [2-5 years]
- The trip to Oskaloosa was great. I really enjoyed the session at William Penn. That session with the Community Building model was a great framework and may be the biggest takeaway that I'll be sharing with my colleagues. [2-5 years]
- The presentation about belonging/civic engagement, bonding and bridging was inspiring. [10-14 years]

Rural Arts Education Assets and Models

- Operating from a place of authenticity and openness when engaging rural communities. [Fewer than two years]
- Gaining insight into how rural communities build on their unique assets to create arts education programs that resonate with their communities. [Fewer than two years]
- Advocacy. How can we utilize partnerships with the people we support to show greater impact and value of arts education? It feels as if there is a disconnect between traditional and non-traditional arts learning. The exposure starts young and the value starts young. How do we build the future if they are not being exposed to it daily in our schools? Arts organizations need to advocate for arts in schools and full-time arts leadership positions in their state and schools/districts need to advocate for community partnerships and after-school funding sources for the arts. We saw a community in which that was happening but it took years. I would like strategies in which to get there and can model for our rural communities. [Fewer than two years]
- The unique power of rural communities to come together in a cross-sector way to provide opportunities to give rural communities arts access while also elevating their experiences of learning new skills and becoming a community asset. [2-5 years]
- The importance of partnerships for deep impact in rural communities. [2-5 years]
- I loved seeing models of thriving arts education in rural communities. [10-14 years]

Workforce Development and Career Pathways

- Creating strong pathways for students to access the arts- and understanding how that access can support and open the door to future careers in the arts for students. [2-5 years]

- I really enjoyed hearing how other states are leveraging the concept of “workforce preparedness” to bolster arts education. [10-14 years]
- The emphasis on workforce development as a focus of arts education; while I see its importance, it raises serious concerns about where we are with the intrinsic value of arts education (creativity, expression, critical thinking) and a holistic approach to education in general. [15 or more years]

Speakers & Programming

- Show up on ten toes. All things Akwi:) Really, all of the speakers were SPOT ON. [2-5 years]
- I loved the keynote speaker - she was terrific. [2-5 years]
- I felt that the panel with the local artists and organizations was inspiring and motivating to find those groups in my state. [2-5 years]
- The whole idea of Mainframe Studios gave me goosebumps and all the good feels - so very thankful for conversations I had with the few artists I was able to visit. [2-5 years]
- I think the keynote speaker, Akwi, was hugely effective and impactful. I appreciated her approach and take on the work. [10-14 years]
- I appreciated hearing from artists about the value of their SAA support. Seso, Arts Force, and Akwi were amazing. [6-9 years]
- I felt that the panel with the local artists and organizations was inspiring and motivating to find those groups in my state. [2-5 years]
- Best quote ever by Tennessee Williams shared by Akwi. [15 or more years]

Conference Structure and Planning

- Iowa was a wonderfully inspiring choice, they have a lot of support for the arts! [Fewer than two years]
- So appreciate the thoughtfulness of Meghan from NASAA and the peer leadership group (AEWG I think?). [Fewer than two years]
- The event was well thought out and organized with our roles in mind. [Fewer than two years]
- I really appreciated having the time to reflect on the sessions with the small group. In the past, it has sometimes been overwhelming to process all of the information in the sessions because it's so jam-packed. I also appreciated that there was a little more space in the schedule this time. [2-5 years]
- This was the best PDI I've been to, and I feel like it has instilled in me confidence to lead in my role. [2-5 years]
- This was the best one I have been to so far. [2-5 years]
- Been to many conferences in my career, but none have been more thoughtfully planned than every Arts Ed PDI including this latest one. [2-5 years]
- The overall balance was fantastic [2-5 years]
- I truly appreciated that time we spent together both engaged as a large group and in our “pods.” [2-5 years]
- I appreciated the “pod” system and how we had a chance to build relationships over several days with new people in our group. [10-14 years]

13. If you have any comments on professional development topics or skills that you would like to learn or discuss in the future, session formats, or strategies for peer-to-peer learning please share those remarks here:

Professional Development Topical Areas

Leadership and Communication Skills

- Pacing your workload when the times are tough and time is short. [Fewer than two years]
- How to navigate the first year for newbies - and paying attention to the legislative sessions. [Fewer than two years]
- I would like some role-play/facilitated learning for codeswitching and communication strategies to further advocate for arts education in different audience/listener contexts. [Fewer than two years]
- How to build relationships with other leaders that can offer support when you are a one-person team. [Fewer than two years]
- I would love to focus on strategic planning (not a lecture about strategic planning or related tools but actually refining vision, goals, values, strategies, realistic timelines, and related metrics). [6-9 years]
- Continued sessions on leadership development. [6-9 years]

Grant Management

- Grants management and program evaluation as related to strategic planning and agency alignment. [2-5 years]
- I do hear a lot of folks wanting to rumble with grant writing, panels, and assessment. I'd be interested to see how we can do this in an engaging way. Perhaps working groups? [2-5 years]
- Strategies to make arts education grants more equitable. [2-5 years]
- Strategies for having tough conversations with constituents (over grant declines, equity in funding, changes to program's priorities) [2-5 years]

Creative Youth and Workforce Development

- I would love to focus on creative youth development, programmatic (as opposed to agency-wide) [6-9 years]
- I appreciate the thinking around supporting creative youth development with transferable skills and justice impacted youth, specifically. I'm curious about how organizations evaluate their programs, support their teaching artists, raise funds, raise awareness, build community, etc. Some of this was touched upon at the PDI, but would love to dig deeper as many of these organizations have relied on federal funds that are less available to engage in this work. [6-9 years]
- Learning more about the work happening in workforce development and arts education. [6-9 years]

Evaluation, Assessment, and Accountability

- Program evaluation. I think evidence-based budgeting is going to become increasingly more important as public funding is scrutinized. [2-5 years]
- I would like to learn more about program evaluation, data collection, and ways to use that data to tell an effective story of the real impact of our work. How can we frame the data- quantitative AND qualitative, so that it compellingly makes the case for the importance of Arts Education access in the lives of our constituents. Especially to those who currently "don't get it." [2-5 years]

Funding and Financial Stability

- It might be nice to hear about strategies for fundraising for accessibility grants/program from state and foundation sources. We have had a little success with this, but I would love to hear from development professionals on this topic. [2-5 years]
- Shifting roles in SAAs: as expenses climb and available grant funding/ legislative appropriations do not, how do we support the field outside of grant-making? Trainings, convenings, site visits, other ideas - what is most impactful? [10-14 years]

Teaching Artist Management

- Personally, I think one area of growth that I would love support in is around not working with artists/teaching artists again. There are a few who have proven to be difficult to work with, but because we are not technically their employers, I do not have a clear guideline on how to off-board them. I am assuming this is a unique situation, but maybe more generally hard conversations with teaching artists, navigating sexism and agism. [2-5 years]

State-to-State Learning/ Exploring State-to-State Models

- What the partnership between SAA & DOE leaders should look like (could look like). [Fewer than two years]
- I wish we could do like a speed dating of what all of our states offer and how we are structured, so we can learn more about the context each of us is working in. [2-5 years]
- Understand the challenges of balancing time devoted to each element of the PDI but I think I still value Peer-to-Peer learning as the most useful. We have amazing colleagues that could benefit both new and returning attendees. [2-5 years]
- I feel like there could have been some richer discussions at our table to dive into similar work that takes place in our state and how we support this work through our roles. What challenges are these artists/organizations facing and how do we build connections/lift them up. [6-9 years]
- Would love to learn more about what makes each state different in their approach to arts ed and state-wide work. [10-14 years]

Session Formats

- In general, I gravitate more to models of programs and services that could in theory be applied elsewhere. [Fewer than two years]
- There seem to be recurring topics that many people have questions about—such as Teaching Artists, Rosters, and Cross-Sector Collaborations. It might be valuable to set aside time for small group discussions around certain areas, providing space to share insights and strategies for approaching them. [Fewer than two years]
- I think it would be really great if we could have a designated time where everyone can check their emails, catch up on work, etc. or just have unstructured conversations. I think that could be fun. Maybe some time during breakfast or during the mid-afternoon slump time when it's harder to pay attention to the speakers anyway. [2-5 years]
- I think more opportunities for “topical” groupings would have been nice, like a time for round robin but each table is a specific topic to discuss among peers, like “POL, Teaching Artists, Grant Management...etc.” [2-5 years]
- Somehow I wonder if there is an intersection between the Flashes of Inspiration, and something that is a bit longer for discussion regarding best practices and where other Arts Ed Managers have found success (or failure and learned from it) that would help inform others' work. [10-14 years]

None

- I don't have any ideas of my own. It is always impactful and relevant no matter the topics:) [2-5 years]
- n/a [2-5 years]

14. Please note any additional comments you have about the 2025 PDI.

Professional Impact

- I'm very grateful for the opportunity to connect with professionals who understand different aspects of this role and for being seen in my approach and intent. I don't have opportunities like this in my own state to connect even with arts education leaders like this, and it helps me elevate my game when I think about ways to bring this to them at a state level. [Fewer than two years]
- The PDI's of the past 4 years have been the most impactful professional learning experiences of my life. Thank you for creating a space of openness, curiosity, and connection. [2-5 years]
- Really wonderful time! I look forward to learning and leaning into our community. [2-5 years]
- Best professional development conference/workshop I have ever had the privilege of being part of these last few years (and that is a lot of opportunities in 20 plus year career). [2-5 years]
- Every year I leave feeling inspired and better prepared to make a real impact in my state through Arts Education. [2-5 years]
- I enjoyed my time with others, learned new names and faces, forged deeper connections with my peers, and gained some surface understandings of programming in Iowa. [6-9 years]

Future Improvements and Opportunities

- I had one thought while walking around Mainframe - there were so many photographers there. It would have been fun to set up a headshot clinic for folks. [2-5 years]
- I did find that I struggled with the amount of sitting during part of the week, if there was perhaps some more opportunity to move around and learn, that would be helpful. For example the four corners activity allowed us to cover a lot of topics but also be more mobile. [2-5 years]
- I would also really have enjoyed some time for art making during the week. I am a process-oriented person and having some time of art making/reflection would have been nice. [2-5 years]
- I just love the peer-to-peer learning and am always looking for more of that. Because there are so many of us, the flashes prove so valuable because often they are kernels of wisdom I may not discuss in a one-on-one conversation if I don't know about the work of that state. I wonder if it would make sense to have flashes earlier on in the PDI, so that there is more time for peers to have deeper discussions about the topics. [2-5 years]
- I think I would have enjoyed some more structured conversations around how the programming in this mostly rural state relates to work in our state. What challenges exist. What opportunities exist. [6-9 years]

AEWG Kudos

- Thank you for all your work in planning and executing this PD opportunity. [Fewer than two years]
- Gratitude for all the work and responsiveness that went into it. [Fewer than two years]

- Loved it! A wonderful first PDI that speaks to everyone that planned it, the people that hosted, and the people who attended. [Fewer than two years]
- Such a valuable PDI, thank you! [Fewer than two years]
- You guys “conference” well. I appreciate all the hard-work and thought that went into all of the details. Thank you! [2-5 years]
- Thanks to the AEWG for their leadership, time, and effort. Thank you for the sense of belonging. [2-5 years]
- The entire week was beautifully crafted, thank you for the time and commitment that went into making this a really lovely experience! [2-5 years]
- I loved it! [6-9 years]
- Meghan McFerrin is such a skilled and humble leader in this field. I feel extremely lucky to learn from her strategic planning and clear support for what we do. [6-9 years]
- LOVED IT. You all knock this out of the park each time. I had a great time in Des Moines and appreciate all of the thoughtful planning behind it. Thank you!!! [10-14 years]
- Thank you to the team that puts these together. I know it's a heavy lift and it's always a really impactful event. [10-14 years]
- I was new and I never felt so welcomed to be a part of something in my whole adult life. Thank you! [Fewer than two years]
- You are perfecting a really good recipe. This is a valuable conference and I am grateful for all the thinking and effort that goes into it. [10-14 years]
- Thanks, AEWG people! You did a terrific job of organizing this conference, even with the last-minute venue switch to Wm. Penn University. From my point of view as a participant, it all took place very seamlessly! [15 or more years]

Additional Comments

- Iowa really surprised me and I didn't look forward to leaving. I wish I could have stayed and left Friday to explore more. [2-5 years]
- Big props to the Peer Pod learning group and how they were used throughout the PDI. It increased peer learning on a deeper level and addressed the usual socially awkward dilemma of “where am I going to sit” from session to session. Please continue to use this model in upcoming PDIs!!! [2-5 years]

None

- N/A [Fewer than two years]
- n/a [2-5 years]