

## *Executive Summary*

***Policy Partners: Making the Case for State Investments in Culture***, a discussion and planning guide for cultural and civic leaders, is the practical outcome of a year-long feasibility study supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The goal of the study was to identify mechanisms, ideas, and practices that could advance state-level cultural policy, especially those policies that augment public resources for culture.

A core group of leaders of national cultural organizations guided the study's design and played a central role in shaping its outcomes—Kelly Barsdate of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies; Margaret (Peggy) Bulger from the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress; John Hammer of the National Humanities Alliance; Kathryn (Kitty) Higgins of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Frank Hodsoll, arts policy consultant and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

On multiple occasions, the study's coordinators from RMC Research Corporation and the core group brought together leaders from different fields of culture—arts, folklife, historic preservation, and humanities—to identify the best ways to increase public investments in culture. ***Policy Partners*** captures the ideas that emerged from those deliberations in the form of a collection of innovative state policies and strategies for adapting policies from one state to another. In the Spring of 2002, The Pew Charitable Trusts provided a grant to the Center for Arts and Culture for dissemination of the ideas in the book.

The study's findings are framed as five premises that are illustrated with a range of examples from fifteen states.

- 1. To have clout in the policy arena on a par with other sectors, the cultural fields must develop alliances and craft unified messages that effectively communicate the value of culture.*
- 2. Cultural collaborations can build on examples of policies from other states along with proven strategies for navigating the political arena.*
- 3. Success in moving policy forward at the state level requires specific capacities, including an understanding of the state's current political and economic climate.*
- 4. National culture organizations are essential partners in policy work at the state and local levels. The arts, folklife, humanities, and historic preservation fields are poised to advance to a new level of policy innovation and collaboration.*
- 5. Policy organizations and opinion leaders from the policy community could become champions for cultural goals.*

Maine's New Century Community Program and Oregon's Trust for Cultural Development exemplify the lessons of the first premise—that collaboration among state agencies and private organizations leads to political credibility, visibility for cultural causes, and increased revenues for culture. The Maine and Oregon stories are included in *Policy Partners* along with examples of effective policy work from the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania and the states of Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Texas among others. These innovative policies are based on a variety of mechanisms that have directly or indirectly increased revenues for culture: trusts, special appropriations, tax credits, targeted fees and taxes, pilot projects, decentralization of grantmaking, special purpose legislative caucuses, and so on.

The other premises are about the practical strategies that can make the difference in policy success at the state level—and the ways that national groups can help to create those capacities. *Policy Partners* provides suggestions for the work of national culture organizations and the policy community, including those that serve governors, state legislators, and community leaders. Many groups, including private funders, can contribute to building the expertise and clout needed for success in forming collaborations, mapping policy assets, collecting information through polling and research, building broad-based coalitions, crafting winning policies, developing compelling arguments, and cultivating support from community, civic, and cultural leaders.

*The heart of Policy Partners is a series of strategies aimed at different stakeholder groups. The strategies are challenges to:*

- *take stock of the policy-relevant assets of each cultural field at national and state levels;*
- *strengthen information and build relationships among leaders of the cultural fields at national and state levels;*
- *assess the conditions and timing for policy innovation;*
- *use policy examples and other information to invent new policy options;*
- *test out the ideas with the public and policymakers; and*
- *obtain the resources for capacity building needed to adopt and implement policy innovations.*

Cultural leaders are ready for a new level of engagement in state policy work. This book is designed to offer fresh ideas and stimulate actions to strengthen public investments in culture. From the perspective of participants who contributed to *Policy Partners*, the time is right to lay the foundation for future innovations.