NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of STATE ARTS AGENCIES

Knowledge ▲ Representation ▲ Community

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities

## Fiscal Year 2024 Update
## (October 2023 – September 2024)

NASAA updates and publishes its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) activities list annually to provide transparency about efforts to advance this critical work. In direct response to member needs and NASAA's Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**M**, our efforts span the breadth of NASAA's programmatic, policy and management portfolios.

This document is comprised of fiscal year 2024 DEI activities from October 2023 – September 2024. For DEI activities undertaken from FY2016 through FY2023, see our archive**M**. FY2024 activities are categorized as follows:

A. Empower State Arts Agencies to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

B. Achieve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within NASAA's Governance and Management Portfolios

C. Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Strategic Partnerships

## A. Empower State Arts Agencies to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- NASAA expanded our suite of data dashboards that help state arts agencies understand the **population demographics** of communities receiving grant funds. We now offer tools to help members explore investments in Rural Communities, Social Vulnerability, Percentage below Poverty and Organizational Size.

- A fresh edition of **Funding Choice PointsM** was released in January 2024. This self-assessment tool critiques common state arts agency grant-making strategies and offers new policy and practice examples from 20 states. **Facilitating Access to Arts Funds** was added as a companion resource. It provides a top-line synopsis of grant shifts for agencies that must comply with DEI restrictions and avoid DEI terminology.
- Building on the success of the Equity GAP Project piloted with the Ohio Arts Council last year, NASAA completed a customized process for the Illinois Arts Council (IAC): the **Equitable Grant Making Assessment Initiative**. It included a combination of policy review, constituent outreach, staff consultation, data analysis and benchmarking. The results informed substantial policy shifts by IAC to broaden the distribution and increase the accessibility of public arts dollars.
- NASAA launched a **custom data project** for Arts Midwest to analyze the distribution of grant funds throughout the Midwestern region through an equity lens. The analysis will consider the geographic distribution of Arts Midwest awards, including funds going to urban vs. rural populations, investments in underserved and socially vulnerable populations, grants to Native organizations/tribes, the frequency of repeat grantees, and grants to organizations of varying capacities and budget cohorts.
- **Strengthening State Arts Agency Relationships with Native Communities** was released in July. This new guide helps state arts agencies cultivate stronger connections with tribal governments, Native organizations and Indigenous artists. Recommendations were informed by an Indigenous Circle of Advisors and field interviews with more than 70 tribal leaders, tribal liaisons, Native nonprofits, elders, artists and culture bearers. The report includes links to a dozen examples of successful state programs as well as recommended resources to support ongoing learning.
- NASAA added a new section on equity in NASAA's State Arts Agency Artist Fellowships Strategy Sampler.
- NASAA recognized outstanding equity work through the DEI Agency AwardM and DEI Individual AwardM. These awards, which come with cash gifts, celebrate agencies and individuals who demonstrate innovative and exceptional efforts to foster DEI in the state arts agency field.
- Through our monthly newsletter, NASAA Notes, we promoted information on **state arts agency programs** emphasizing DEI. This included Minnesota's Accessible Arts Program, ArtsPay New Jersey, the Initiating Equity Work program in Rhode Island, Ohio's Artists with Disabilities Access Program and California's Research on Statewide Access to Arts Funding. We published multiple articles on tribal relations and support for Indigenous artists, including information on strategies adopted by Washington, Massachusetts, California and the Northern Marianas, among others. NASAA also used Notes to offer a curated collection of equity research and resources.

- NASAA answered numerous DEI **information requests** from members. Topics included DEI planning, metrics and measurement, equitable grant making, and program design for underserved communities.
- Through our **legislative tracking**, NASAA monitored bills**M** pertaining to DEI and the arts. We also monitor bills relevant to critical race theory, "divisive concepts," transgender performers and LGBTQ+ issues, to assess how they affect the operating environment for state arts agencies.
- NASAA completed an update to the National DEI Consultant Sourcebook**,** a listing of facilitators and trainers with both arts and equity experience.
- Equity work is a strong component of NASAA's **professional development programming** for members:
    - NASAA facilitated and equitable grant making workshop for the folk and traditional arts program managers network.
    - The Arts Education Professional Development Institute featured programs for youth impacted by the justice system and Utah's collaborative Native American Curriculum model.
    - The Creative Aging Institute equipped participants to reduce ageism in arts programming and tailor services to older adults. It featured diverse presenters, including a session on an arts program serving transgender older adults.
    - Assessing Grant-Making Outcomes and Community Reach featured the efforts of multiple states to evaluate the equity of their arts investments.
    - Investing in Accessibility and Disabled Artists promoted state arts agency strategies for serving individuals and artists with disabilities.
    - Numerous job-alike peer groups have convened virtual discissions on DEI topics.
    - The December 2023 Executive Forum supported facilitated dialogue about DEI challenges arising in the programmatic, political and personnel realms.
    - Multiple sessions on equity and inclusion took place at NASAA Assembly 2024**M**, which featured a strong emphasis on the distinct cultural milieu of San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- NASAA supported the efforts of the **People of Color Affinity Group** for state arts agency staff and council members who identify as people of color.

# B. Achieve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within NASAA's Governance and Management Portfolios

- NASAA completed an **equity audit** in partnership with Team Dynamics. With the active involvement of the board, staff and membership, this comprehensive process examined

our organizational culture, governance, policies and operations. Early action items included the adoption of group norms for staff, revising NASAA's personnel policy manual, and revisiting compensation benchmarks and salary ranges. NASAA staff meets regularly to reflect on key learnings and advance implementation action steps. The board began its own discussions about action steps in April.

- NASAA conducted an in-depth analysis of responses pertaining to DEI contained in the 135 interviews conducted by the 2024 Nominating Committee. This analysis examined all **feedback received about the impact of NASAA's DEI work** (beneficial effects as well as potentially adverse effects) on member agencies. The results will inform future communications and DEI program delivery.
- The NASAA **board of directors** continued to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including DEI segments as meeting agenda items.
- The **Governance Committee** continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2024 activities included a review of NASAA's priorities regarding board composition and leadership attributes.
- Our **editorial style guide** for written materials is kept up to date with language and terms that are inclusive and welcoming to diverse populations.
- DEI activities and achievements are **reported** annually to the board and membership. NASAA also is in the process of developing a new mechanism for reporting on implementation progress of action items stemming from our equity audit.

## C. Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Strategic Partnerships

- In collaboration with the NEA, the White House Domestic Policy Council and a team of foundation partners, NASAA served as the fiscal agent for Healing, Bridging, Thriving: A Summit on Arts and Culture in Our Communities. Reaching nearly 3,500 people in person and online in January, the summit explored how the arts can **promote equitable outcomes across multiple policy domains,** including health, community development, infrastructure and the environment. NASAA continues to facilitate connections between federal agencies, foundations and state arts agencies that share complementary equity and policy goals.
- In conjunction with the summit, NASAA published three **policy papers** prepared by the CAIR (Cross-Sector Artists in Residence) Lab in collaboration with the Mellon Foundation. Arts + Infrastructure, Arts + Health for Social Cohesion, and Arts + Transportation examine opportunities to facilitate equitable policy outcomes through artist-led projects.
- NASAA's CEO attended **The Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture,** the world's largest celebration of Indigenous Pacific Islanders. While in Hawai'i, NASAA participated in

strategic consultations about state, regional and federal support systems for the **Pacific island jurisdictions.**

- NASAA served as an advocacy training partner for the **National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures** and as a policy advisor for the **BIPOC** [Black, Indigenous and/or people of color] **Arts Advocacy Coalition.**
- NASAA's CEO continues to represent NASAA and state arts agencies on the **Grantmakers in the Arts** board and its Cultural Policy Committee.
- NASAA actively participated in the **National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response** steering committee, counseled states and jurisdictions affected by disasters, and advised the Federal Emergency Management Agency on making assistance more accessible. Poor communities and populations of color are often disproportionally affected by natural disasters.
- Pam Breaux's seat on the **Americans for the Arts (AFTA) executive search committee** is an opportunity to bring state arts agencies' perspectives on equity to the attention of AFTA leadership.

NASAA began its deep focus on DEI in fall 2015. The work broadly includes all realms of human difference, as well as a focus on race equity. We note the following about inclusion at NASAA:

As of September 2024, NASAA's board of directors is comprised of:

- 59% people of color
- 50% women
- 50% men
- 36.4% people below or at 50 years old
- 14% people with disabilities
- two members of the LGBTQIA+ community

As of September 2024, NASAA's full-time staff is comprised of:

- 40% people of color
- 80% women
- 27% men
- 46% people below or at 50 years old

For archived activities, see Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities at NASAA: Archive.