NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of STATE ARTS AGENCIES

Knowledge ▲ Representation ▲ Community

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities: Archive

## FY2016 – FY2023

## FY2016

- The NASAA board of directors and new CEO discussed diversity, equity and inclusion; this conversation, which occurred in a board meeting open to members during the Leadership Institute, launched NASAA's efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- An Inclusive Leadership session was held at the Salt Lake City, Utah, Leadership Institute. The session explored how state arts agencies (SAAs) can address the needs of changing communities through policies and practice.
- NASAA published an info guide to inform SAA members about our work to advance diversity. The guide framed this work in terms of actions focusing on NASAA as an association and NASAA services supporting the work of SAAs. This framework guided our thinking regarding governance, management, and research and leadership development.
- NASAA published a new infographic that demonstrates SAA grant investments in low-income communities across America.
- The Governance Committee explored models and best practices for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA published State Policies and Programs Addressing Diversity, a strategy sampler that catalogued and profiled SAA policies and programs.
- NASAA hosted a webinar on America's changing demographics, featuring Dr. Manuel Pastor, a prominent specialist in sociology, American studies and ethnicity.
- The Governance Committee drafted a policy statement for NASAA on diversity, equity and inclusion. The statement informed board discussions at the upcoming Leadership Institute.

- The Executive Committee approved NASAA's updated employee handbook (which includes updates to equal employment opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act language). NASAA adopted a more rigorous approach for identifying and attracting more diverse candidate pools for hiring new employees.
- The board of directors convened for its strategic planning retreat and fall board meeting (two days). Both convenings included discussions to explore and provide guidance for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The Bridging Difference and Diversity session was held at NASAA Assembly 2016 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- NASAA hosted the Professional Development Institute for SAA arts education managers and state education agency directors of arts education; the group explored the guiding question, how can our efforts to characterize inclusion, diversity, equity and access in arts learning support our development as champions for these practices within our agencies, states and the larger arts sector?
- NASAA's CEO facilitated Maine SAA stakeholder convening to jump-start its conversation on diversity, equity and inclusion.

## FY2017

- The Governance Committee continued its work to develop NASAA's policy statement and recommended related activities. It also formulated a plan to involve all 1,400 (est.) SAA staff and council members in informing our new policy.
- NASAA members from 40 states participated in developing NASAA's DEI policy. The Governance Committee continued to shepherd the process and finalize the draft statement.
- NASAA hosted a webinar, Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: SAA Programs and Policies, to showcase work from the California Arts Council, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and Wisconsin Arts Board.
- The NASAA board of directors approved the final draft of our association's new policy statement on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NASAA shared its new diversity, equity and inclusion policy statement with all members and partners via the NASAA Notes newsletter.
- The Governance Committee reviewed NASAA DEI activities to date; it also made recommendations for activities moving forward. The committee's ideas will continue to be shared for inclusion in planning activities. Importantly, the committee requested that our ongoing DEI activities continue to be catalogued and shared with the committee and board.
- NASAA released a new tool to promote equity in grant making: Visualizing Grant Diversity: The Demographics of SAA Grants. This customized tool will help SAAs better understand the alignment of their grant making with demographics. An interactive dashboard overlays grants data with state demographics. It's now available for all states and jurisdictions.

# FY2018

- NASAA members approved a new strategic plan that asserts NASAA's work is now guided by enduring values that include diversity, equity and inclusion. The strategic plan also includes a hyperlink to NASAA's DEI policy statement.
- The People of Color Affinity Group was launched. The group is designed to provide an informal support system among people of color at state arts agencies, as well as to provide counsel to NASAA about the needs of people of color within our field. SAA staff and council members are participating.
- NASAA became facilitator of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) equity working group. The working group will research and report on equity in arts education programming active at national arts and educational organizations that are affiliated with AEP. Selected SAAs were also included within the working group. We expect the research report will cite practices, policies, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities across the sector.
- The Governance Committee reviewed the updated list of DEI activities and provided recommendations for activities moving forward.
- A mentorship program for SAA people of color was developed. The program is designed to provide career development assistance to people of color within the SAA family.
- NASAA held a daylong board and staff race equity workshop led by Race Forward, an organization that brings systemic analysis and an innovative approach to complex race issues to help people take effective action toward racial equity. Because Race Forward is home to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, the organization was especially qualified to help NASAA equip our state agency members for success in their funding equity work.

# FY2019

- NASAA Assembly 2018 was held, designed to provide numerous cross-cutting opportunities for DEI to be a component of the conference. DEI discussions and trainings were included in preconferences, deep dives, peer sessions and briefing sessions.
- NASAA's board meeting included the annual opportunity to report and reflect on our work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- 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. As of August 2018, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color on NASAA's board and staff:
    - In October 2015, 10% of the NASAA board was made up of people of color. At this time, 28% of the board is made up of people of color. (A member who recently departed the Connecticut SAA and the NASAA board; before her departure, 33% of the board included people of color.)
    - In October 2015, 16% of the NASAA staff was made up of people of color, and at this time, 36% of the staff is made up of people of color.

- NASAA piloted a DEI mentorship program for 10 mentor-mentee pairs. Pairs met virtually once per month to engage in conversations related to the mentee's state arts agency career goals and diversity, equity and inclusion considerations. Mentees met as a cohort twice via videoconference to share their insights and experiences. Mentors met as a cohort once to share their experiences. The program concluded with a debrief call bringing all participants together to reflect on the pilot program and offer feedback on how to improve it to better serve members' needs in the future.
- The 2018 Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute (PDI) continued an exploration of inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on resilience and trauma-informed education practices.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Managers Peer Group met quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education, provide feedback for PDI planning, and develop a tool for peer group members to track how they are implementing "practical, tactical" changes to advance equity in their states' arts education programs and practices. The upcoming 2019 PDI was planned to emphasize meaningful engagement with rural, remote and tribal populations.
- NASAA chaired and facilitated the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group. The group conducted a scan of equity definitions, policies and practices among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.
- NASAA facilitated a working session with a subcommittee of the Arts Education Partnership's Equity Working Group to generate definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion to include in a forthcoming toolkit AEP is designing for its members.
- NASAA examined the distribution of state arts agency grant investments and established national benchmarks for Rural Equity, Economic Equity and Race Equity. These three interactive dashboards tell the story of state arts agencies' aggregate investments and articulate areas where there is room for collective improvement.
- NASAA's research team introduced a new generation of state level equity dashboards, Visualizing Equity in Grant Making, expanding this suite of services. These dashboards now include two years of data as well as state-specific program analysis. The updated dashboards enable users to see changes in year-over-year funding and population shifts. Additionally, we piloted several dashboards incorporating state-specific program data that can provide insights into which programs have the greatest reach statewide.
- We continued to curate and circulate research resources on DEI, making information from other sectors readily accessible to SAAs. Examples include a Federal Reserve article on The Effects of Gentrification, a study on Cultural Festivals as Intergroup Settings (conducted on the Festival of Pacific Arts, hosted by our Guam member agency), tips on mediating constructive disagreements in DEI conversations and Gender Equity in Museums Movement. In fact, every 2019 edition of NASAA's Announcements and Resources column in NASAA Notes featured diversity, equity or inclusion resources.
- NASAA showcased state arts agencies' DEI work in NASAA's State to State column. Recently featured programs included the Massachusetts DEI Plan, Wisconsin's Woodland Indian Arts Initiative, South Dakota's Tribal Arts Awards, New Jersey's Diversity in Arts

Leadership Internship, Alaska's ARTShops Initiative and Kansas's Indigenous Arts Initiative.

- NASAA delivered many member education programs to help SAAs meet their DEI goals. We infused DEI throughout our Assembly 2018 conference program and also dedicated sessions to transformative equity at the Baltimore Museum of Art, equity in panel processes, leading inclusive dialogue, Indigenous engagement and using grants data to advance equitable grant policies. A DEI Profiles webinar shared the programs, policies and partnerships the California Arts Council is using to advance DEI.
- Our State Arts Agency Staffing Trends report included new data on the demographics of the state arts agency field, including baseline information on race, age, LGBTQA+, disability and veteran status.
- Nominating Committee and Planning & Budget Committee work over summer 2019 included specific questions about how NASAA can best assist SAAs with DEI. Interviews were conducted with 98 state arts agency executive directors and chairs/council members, and the report of findings explored how NASAA can support members in this priority area.
- NASAA joined ACES: The Society for Editing, which shares tips and provides training for avoiding bias traps, helping us attain greater inclusion in our language standards.
- NASAA's creative aging partnership with Aroha Philanthropies elevated the work that state arts agencies are doing to widen creative opportunities for older adults, a growing population that is disproportionally concentrated in rural areas and is more likely to be economically distressed, to experience food insecurity and to be living with health problems.
- NASAA collaborated with the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations to coauthor an article for the Community Development Innovation Review, a journal published by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco to promote cross-sector scholarship on economic resilience and mobility for low-income communities. The article recommended state policy innovations that hold the potential to support more equitable placemaking activity across the nation.
- NASAA grew the size of our affinity group for people of color. The group gathered for an in-person meeting at Assembly 2018, as well as during quarterly conference calls. In 2019 the group self-organized around topics of interest to the cohort, and NASAA provided a listserv for the group to remain connected between formal meetings.
- The 2019 Leadership Institute continued NASAA's efforts to provide numerous opportunities for DEI to be infused across the conference. DEI discussions and trainings were planned for peer groups, plenaries and breakout sessions.
- We continued our work to embody DEI principles in NASAA's recruitment practices and organizational culture. Time was regularly allocated for DEI sharing at all weekly staff meetings and at in-person board meetings.
- NASAA's most recent employee satisfaction survey, administered in late 2018, revealed:
    - Staff understands the importance of valuing differences and believes management demonstrates a commitment to valuing differences.

    - Staff agrees that NASAA activities are helping us make progress toward valuing diversity.
- Within our action plan, NASAA included DEI as one of four key priorities for our organization in 2019. This priority was also moving forward within the draft 2020 action plan.
- NASAA's Governance Committee reviewed 2019 DEI activities and recommended activities for the 2020 action plan.

# FY2020

- NASAA updated its national benchmarks for State Arts Agencies Advancing Rural Equity, Income Equity and Race Equity. These interactive dashboards describe state arts agency investments in aggregate relative to demographics and identify areas where state arts agencies could focus further attention.
- NASAA continued our Visualizing Equity in Grant Making service, providing granular detail on the demographics of state arts agency grant making. Available analyses include populations of color, low-income areas, populations with disabilities, veteran populations and others.
- The 2019 NASAA Leadership Institute emphasized DEI through plenary sessions on equity in grant making and in-depth workshops on bias in panel adjudication practices, inclusive leadership, anti-ageist programming and peer group dialogues around diversity issues.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group met quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education. A focus of conversation was equity gaps in home based schooling and state plans to reopen classrooms after they were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Shifting Policy and Practice online learning series (offered in lieu of a physical Assembly in 2020) focused on critical changes state arts agencies need to make to address DEI and create communities where all can flourish. Sessions explored our landscape of inequality, from community trauma to equitable grant making and more.
- Given the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on communities of color, poor families and older adults, NASAA made a concerted effort to integrate equity considerations into our member services addressing the pandemic. Our COVID-19 Resources for State Arts Agencies foregrounds antidiscrimination resources as well as facilitation tips to ensure inclusive dialogue. We emphasized equity considerations in how state arts agencies disseminate federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act funding through NASAA communications and SAA program profiles.
- NASAA's creative aging partnership with Aroha Philanthropies strengthened the ability of state arts agencies to address the needs of older adults, a growing population that is highly vulnerable to discrimination, poor health, isolation and poverty. NASAA submitted a proposal requesting substantial new funding to support this work in 2021 and 2022.
- We continued to elevate state arts agency programs addressing DEI in monthly State to State bulletins. We recently spotlighted programs from California, Nevada, New York and

Rhode Island, among others. We are also using this vehicle to deliberately elevate the work of our island jurisdiction members. Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands all received visibility, with American Samoa and Guam to follow.

- We launched an Inclusive Language Guide for state arts agencies. Offering language guidance around race, ability, age, LGBTQA+ identity, economic status and more, this new guide coaches our field on how to avoid stereotypes and acknowledge differences with respect.
- In conjunction with the Inclusive Language Guide rollout, NASAA created a new hub for DEI on our website. It provides one-stop shopping for models, resources, professional development opportunities and the policy documents that guide NASAA's DEI work.
- NASAA planned a virtual convocation for state arts agency community development coordinators in fall 2020. Sponsored by ArtPlace America, this professional development program was designed through a DEI lens to address how SAAs can foster equitable community development, empower historically marginalized groups and prevent the unintended consequences of some creative placemaking efforts.
- NASAA was developing a new Equity Choice Points tool that will help state arts agencies identify bias and barriers embedded within their traditional grant-making practices. We intend it to become a practical tool to assist with eligibility and adjudication criteria as well as application and award processes. The tool will be presented during our fall 2020 Learning Series, Shifting Policy and Practice: Insights and Actions for States.
- NASAA began developing an inventory of consultants and facilitators that SAAs have used for DEI training and equity work at the state level. These referrals will become a resource for members seeking to engage experienced consultants for DEI work with their staff, councils or grantees. We expect to publish the inventory later this year.
- NASAA supported the efforts of the SAA People of Color Affinity Group. This year the affinity group onboarded leadership from the field and conducted planning for group convenings that will take place during fall and winter 2020. Affinity group leadership consists of cochairs and an advisor representing SAA staff and council members.
- The Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute continued to explore inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on serving rural, remote and tribal populations through asset based approaches to grant making. PDI convenings take place in October 2020.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group met quarterly to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education.
- NASAA's research team reported to the People of Color Affinity Group on the issue of retaining staff of color. We included the policies and practices of what various public-sector agencies do to retain staff of color.
- NASAA continued to provide customized counsel and assistance to state arts agencies as they work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within their portfolios.
- We continued to embed diversity, equity and inclusion questions into all our nominating interviews and action planning conversations, ensuring that a broad spectrum of DEI factors inform NASAA's governance, programming and operations.

- Internally, the NASAA staff maintained a discipline of holding weekly all-staff conversations about DEI, to offer ideas and embed key concepts into our work as a team. We established an #anti-racism Slack channel to make it easy to share resources internally.
- The NASAA board of directors continued to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including a DEI segment at its meetings.
- The Governance Committee continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2020 activities included reviewing NASAA's DEI policy statement, reviewing NASAA's FY2020 DEI activities list and applying an equity lens to at-large nomination practices.
- NASAA continued to diversify how and where we recruit candidates for staff positions. We include outreach at historically Black colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C., area and from Richmond, Virginia, to Baltimore, Maryland. NASAA also began recruiting on highly rated diversity focused websites. We continued to conduct individual outreach efforts with colleagues of color as they become part of our network, helping us promote our job openings through their personal/professional networks.
- NASAA operations staff continued to participate in human resources/diversity training through Society for Human Resource Management webinars and networking with the American Management Association diversity group.
- NASAA's 2020 Nominating Committee prioritized identifying diverse candidates, specifically people of color, people under 50 and people from states that have been underrepresented on the NASAA board. In addition, the committee made changes to NASAA's board nominations process to reduce barriers to participation, including streamlining application forms and asking nominators to write statements of support for prospective candidates.
- We lent a leadership voice to DEI within and beyond our membership. Continuing to Prioritize Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and America, the Arts and Racial Injustice are just two examples. We also made sure that NASAA and SAAs have a presence in equity work being led by other national organizations. NASAA staff participated in the Native Arts & Culture: Resilience, Reclamation & Relevance convening hosted by the National Endowment for the Arts and in two racial equity forums hosted by Grantmakers in the Arts.
- NASAA chaired the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group. The group is a professional learning community that gathers to support ongoing learning and dialogue related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.
- NASAA provided keynote and panel presentations on the arts as a rural development asset at several conferences during FY2020. National presentations were provided at the Rural Arts and Culture Summit in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and at the Grantmakers in the Arts conference in Denver, Colorado. A statewide arts summit presentation on the topic was provided in Cheyenne, Wyoming. NASAA promoted this work through its social media channels.
- NASAA provided or participated in panel presentations on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at several conferences during FY2020. A national presentation on equity in grant

making was provided at the Grantmakers in the Arts annual conference in Denver, Colorado. A statewide arts conference presentation on inclusive excellence was provided in Indianapolis, Indiana.

# FY2021

- Promoted policies and programs state arts agencies have used to advance DEI at the state level. Some examples included Pennsylvania's new operating support guidelines, Florida's grant-making task force, the BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and/or people of color] Youth Alumni Council and Culture Rx initiatives in Massachusetts, Wyoming's Native Art Fellowship, the Sogelau Monument Project in American Samoa, preservation of ancestral CHamoru traditions in Guam, and many others.
- Convened SAAs, regional arts organizations (RAOs), territories and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to pool ideas for the equitable distribution of federal American Rescue Plan Act funding.
- Implemented the Creative Placemaking Convocation for SAA community development coordinators, which was specifically designed to incorporate DEI values in content and speaker/artist representation.
- Designed and implemented the NASAA 2021 Learning Series with a focus on infusing sessions with diverse speakers and topic areas that are relevant for SAA DEI work.
- Developed a request for proposals, selected a trainer and began work on designing a series of anti-bias trainings for membership to take place in fall 2021.
- Participated in a virtual group discussion of advisors to review Mass Cultural Council's first-ever Racial Equity Plan, which will guide all future agency planning and policy decisions.
- The DEI+A Subcommittee of NASAA's Arts Education Peer Group met biannually to share resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access in arts education. A current focus of conversation is how to ensure that state arts agency grant-making practices and policies in arts education are as equitable as possible for all constituents.
- The State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute continues to explore inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on increasing and sustaining equity in arts education postpandemic. PDI convenings will take place in September and October 2021.
- Answered 53-member information requests about DEI (partial-year data October 2020-April 2021). Topics ranged from grant-making strategies focusing on BIPOC and rural groups to reducing bias in panel adjudication to strategies for engaging boards in DEI efforts.
- Supported the efforts of the SAA People of Color Affinity Group. This year the staff supported leadership from the field and conducted planning for quarterly group convenings. The affinity group leadership consists of cochairs and an advisor representing SAA staff and council members.

- Shared DEI research, program models and equity resources from outside of the SAA sector in every edition of the NASAA Notes newsletter. Examples included Centering the Picture: The Role of Race & Ethnicity in Cultural Engagement in the U.S.; Buffering against Uncertainty: Working Capital and the Resiliency of BIPOC-Serving Organizations; Accessibility and the Arts: Reconsidering the Role of the Artist; and Bridging Divides, Creating Community: Arts, Culture and Immigration, among others.
- Analyzed populations-benefiting data related to race, age and distinct groups for all available data to understand data gaps and reporting trends for all SAAs and RAOs.
- Promoted the Visualizing Equity in Grant Making service. This service uses dynamic data dashboards—delivered through customized online demonstrations to 23 SAAs—to help members understand which demographic cohorts their funds are reaching.
- Conducted research on equity audit models for grant making. NASAA interviewed five SAAs that have conducted such assessments and also secured examples of audit reports from private grant makers and other public agencies. The resulting information will be used to inform the Equitable Grantmaking Assessment Pilot Project in FY2022, to demonstrate how SAAs might approach audits of their funding policies and practices.
- Improved practices in designing for accessibility within NASAA's data visualization work and delivered ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-compliant maps for the NEA to describe NEA and SAA activities in each state.
- Secured Team Dynamics as our consulting partner for a comprehensive anti-bias training program that will be offered to state arts agencies October-December 2021.
- Prepared a new federal policy plank (Strengthening America through Arts and Creativity: A 2021 Federal Policy Agenda) urging elected officials to revive America's economy through the arts and tap the nation's creative assets to achieve greater equity and facilitate community healing.
- Compiled information on state legislation pertaining to critical race theory and bills that may affect SAAs' ability to conduct DEI training. Tracked and reported other legislation relevant to SAAs' DEI policies and programs.
- Led collective impact efforts to integrate DEI into arts education policies and practices. Examples include chairing the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group; convening the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion + Access Committee of SAA arts education managers; and providing professional development to help SAAs develop accessible and culturally responsive arts learning programs.
- Integrated timely equity topics into 2021 Learning Series sessions: new paradigms for BIPOC artist support and strategies for making operating support grant funding more accessible for organizations rooted in BIPOC, rural and other underserved communities. The series also featured a diverse roster of experts and artists addressing other topics.
- Updated and expanded NASAA's DEI Consultant Sourcebook.
- Collaborated with ArtsWA to conduct research on strategies SAAs are using to integrate equity into their strategic planning, policies and programming. This work included preparing in-depth case studies of four states, convening a roundtable on strategies for advancing equity in state public art programs, and convening a roundtable on best

practices for deepening SAA relationships with diverse communities. Reports will be released to the membership in September.

- Served as a consultant for WolfBrown in the evaluation of California Arts Council programs, specifically conducting a landscape analysis to determine how public and private funders reach BIPOC arts organizations across the state of California.
- NASAA staff worked with the SAA community development network cochairs to design a two-day retreat that infused DEI issues into their agenda, particularly with regards to climate change, rural equity and cultural district work.
- Periodically updated the Inclusive Language Guide and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources web page.
- Continued monthly staff anti-racism lunch meetings to discuss current DEI issues.
- The NASAA board of directors continued to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority by including a DEI segment as a meeting agenda item.
- The Governance Committee continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2021 activities included a review of NASAA's board composition/attributes needed guide and an expansive review of NASAA's DEI agenda/activities.
- Continued to embed diversity, equity and inclusion questions into all of our Nominating Committee interviews and action planning conversations, ensuring that a broad spectrum of DEI factors informs NASAA's governance, programming and operations.
- NASAA's 2021 Nominating Committee prioritized identifying diverse candidates for the NASAA board, specifically people of color, people under 50 and executive directors. NASAA's board nomination process was recently revised to reduce barriers to participation, so that application forms are simplified and nominators commit to writing statements of support for prospective candidates.
- Increased NASAA's inclusion of images of historically disenfranchised groups on the website, in communications and on social media.
- Operations staff participated in various workshops, including ArtEquity's Finding the Keys, Antiracist Approaches to Radical Recruitment in the Arts; NonprofitHR's Keys to Integrating DEI: Transparency, Power-Sharing and Accountability; and monthly DEI Corners hosted by the HR Roundtable.
- Improved NASAA's recruitment practices to encourage diversity in engaging contractors and vendors.
- Secured Team Dynamics to facilitate a comprehensive anti-bias training program for NASAA staff.
- Hired Esor Consulting as NASAA's third-party Salesforce vendor. Esor partners with HBCUforce, a nonprofit organization that works with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to implement programs that provide early access to cloud computing careers.
- Collaborated with U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD), the NEA and DAISA Enterprises to present Rural Placemaking at the Intersection of Arts, Agriculture and Economic Development. This briefing oriented USDA-RD field offices to the work of SAAs and elevated the arts as a strategy for promoting sustainable rural development.

- Compiled and shared with the NEA a variety of strategies used by state arts agencies to diversify their distribution of state and federal CARES Act relief funding.
- Supplied feedback on the National Endowment for the Arts strategic plan, emphasizing the opportunity to provide federal leadership for equity efforts in the arts field.
- Canvassed SAAs and RAOs on strategies they use to recruit new grant applicants and extend funding to groups historically excluded from public support. Prepared a briefing paper for the NEA highlighting examples from 27 SAAs and RAOs.
- Coordinated SAA grants officer sessions with guest speakers addressing DEI issues. Speakers included: Jimmy Castillo from the Houston Arts Alliance to discuss the City of Houston's Civic Art Collection Equity Review, David Holland from WESTAF to discuss the Regional Arts Resilience Program and how it was adapted to better serve BIPOC and rural communities, and Dana Parsons from the Maryland State Arts Council to present the training that Maryland conducts on intrinsic bias for all grant panelists.
- Conducted presentations and workshops designed to help the boards of members and allies to integrate DEI into their policies, governance and advocacy practices. This included sessions with SAAs (New Hampshire, Chicago, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Nebraska and Oklahoma), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, CultureSource, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and other groups.
- In collaboration with Aroha Philanthropies, NASAA announced the award of $1,457,000 in grant funding to 36 state and jurisdictional arts agencies. As part of NASAA's Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative, these grants strengthen the ability of SAAs to address the needs of older adults, a growing population that is highly vulnerable to discrimination, poor health, isolation and poverty. The grants also expand opportunities for creative aging across the nation, facilitating lifelong learning, joy, social engagement and improved well-being for older adults. In July 2021, NASAA produced the inaugural Creative Aging Institute, which explored the intersectionality of aging and ageism with other forms of social discrimination based on ability, race, geographic location and more.
- Cooperated with the NEA to provide racial equity training for state arts agency folk and traditional arts coordinators.
- NASAA staff participated in the Sustaining and Advancing Indigenous Cultures Native Artists Summit. The summit was designed to establish a sustainable structure for helping tribal communities, cultural facilities, educational institutions, funders and others to improve support for Native artists.
- Worked in partnership with the NEA to craft a multiday online SAA Accessibility Coordinators Peer Group convening focused on best practices and diversity.
- NASAA chairs the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group. The group is a professional community that gathers to support ongoing learning and dialogue related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.
- 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. As of October 2021, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color on NASAA's board and staff:

- In October 2015, 10% of the NASAA board was made up of people of color. As of September 2021, 52% of the FY2021 NASAA board is comprised of people of color.
- In October 2015, 16% of the NASAA staff was made up of people of color. To date, 35% of the NASAA staff are people of color.

# FY2022

- Elevated DEI leadership in state arts agencies by adjudicating NASAA's second DEI Agency and Individual Award.
- NASAA answered numerous questions about DEI from members. Many information requests centered on equitable grant-making strategies (especially for operating support), panel practices and benchmarking.
- NASAA completed an arts funding ecosystem analysis for the California Arts Council. This analysis, focusing on systems of support for BIPOC organizations, is part of a comprehensive evaluation effort designed to assess the SAAs' funding systems through a race equity lens.
- NASAA completed the Equity GAP (Equitable Grant Making Assessment Pilot) Project in collaboration with the Ohio Arts Council. This pilot demonstrated how a state arts agency can assess—and ultimately reduce—obstacles to public funding experienced by rural, BIPOC, disabled and low-income communities.
- NASAA hosted an Equitable Operating Support Jam Session to share strategies state arts agencies have used to reduce obstacles to funding for underserved groups. The session featured three state arts agencies. Follow-up resources featured guidelines and program links for 13 agencies, all of whom have made recent policy shifts.
- NASAA's legislative scanning tracks bills pertaining to DEI and the arts. We also monitor bills relevant to critical race theory, to assess how they affect the operating environment for SAAs.
- NASAA promoted our Visualizing Equity in Grant Making data service suite as well as our State Arts Agencies Advancing Rural Equity, Economic Equity and Race Equity benchmarks.
- NASAA showcased 19 unique DEI initiatives launched by SAAs. This included the People's Markets Program in Kansas, Rhode Island's grant guidelines revisions, Maryland's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Project, the Virgin Islands' Madras trademark, Delaware's Arts Equity Innovation Incubator, artist workforce strategies from California and Colorado and Massachusetts's Racial Equity Plan, among others.
- NASAA highlighted rural investment strategies by showcasing programs from Idaho, Oregon and West Virginia, Minnesota, Oklahoma and Tennessee, all of which were designed to promote rural equity and increase access to arts resources in underserved geographies. We also updated our interactive dashboard showing data on rural grant making by SAAs.

- NASAA featured DEI resources in every edition of NASAA Notes. Topics included funding strategies, workforce diversity, monument removal, accessibility design, and research on the needs and perceptions of BIPOC community members.
- NASAA compiled an inventory of the grant application and final report questions asked by all states and regions. We analyzed the results with a particular focus on questions being asked about applicant/community demographics and strategies applicants are adopting to address DEI and engage underserved communities. The results will inform subsequent field conversations about data collection challenges and opportunities.
- NASAA staff conducted customized sessions on equity in grant making for SAA board or council task forces in Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.
- Addressed DEI issues through the virtual 2022 Learning Series. The Diversifying and Empowering the Pipeline webinar focused on how SAAs can further strengthen and diversify their leadership pipelines. A session on the American Communities Project showed how research is helping to break down stereotypes and lift up the nuanced demographic realities of rural America. Partnering with State Departments of Education featured efforts that SAAs are making to alleviate learning loss in low-income and rural communities.
- Numerous peer group activities revolved around DEI. Virtual gatherings of executive directors, deputy directors, folk arts managers, arts education managers, grants officers and community development coordinators explored issues relating to grant making equity and accessibility, among other topics.
- NASAA hosted a two-part webinar on SAA relationships with teaching artists. This webinar (and related research resources) explored ways that SAAs can collaborate with teaching artists to make arts learning more equitable.
- NASAA completed a comprehensive anti-bias training program. The training for staff and councils helped members develop a deeper understanding of their own identities and equipped them to ask the right questions to support inclusive workplaces, interactions, programs and services.
- Promoting equity was a central design tenet of Assembly 2022. The agenda included sessions on grant-making equity, facilitating DEI efforts among nonprofit arts groups, rural equity issues, best practices for accessibility, intercultural competence for teaching artists and more. The program also celebrated the creative achievements of many BIPOC artists.
- The State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute continued to explore inclusion, diversity, equity and access with an emphasis on increasing and sustaining equity in arts education postpandemic. PDI convenings took place online in fall 2021 and in person at Assembly 2022.
- In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Folklore Society, NASAA offered the online workshops Centering Equity in Our Practice and Equitable Grant Making to a new cohort of state arts agency folk arts program managers. The workshops were part of a seven-session professional development series and considered equitable practice and dismantling structural inequities within the field. Recordings of all sessions are available for future viewing.

- The Folk & Traditional Arts Preconference, held prior to Assembly 2022, was infused with discussions important to diversity, equity and inclusion. Sessions included an intersectional examination of where program managers exercise power and influence in their lives and work; a sharing of strategies and resources to help prepare communities to welcome climate migrants, refugees or immigrants; and an interrogation of the accepted best practices of the field from the viewpoints of equity, impact and sustainability.
- Instituted the second iteration of NASAA's DEI mentorship program for state arts agency staff and council members of color.
- Supported the efforts of the SAA People of Color Affinity Group. This year the staff supported leadership from the field and conducted planning for quarterly group convenings. The affinity group leadership consists of cochairs and an advisor representing SAA staff and council members.
- NASAA revised our strategic plan, and many of the changes focus on NASAA's priority commitment to equity. We highlighted the DEI values that guide our work and incorporated an explicit commitment to DEI action planning as a cross-cutting objective. We also are recommending language emphasizing NASAA's inclusive, nonpartisan and nonjudgmental approach to equity.
- Embedded DEI into NASAA's FY2023 action planning. Actions and services relating to equity, in particular, appear across all four of NASAA's strategic goals.
- The Governance Committee continued to lead NASAA's board involvement in DEI. FY2022 activities included a revision of the NASAA board giving policy to reduce barriers for board participation and development of a board demographic survey to better advance equity in board service.
- NASAA's 2022 Nominating Committee prioritized identifying diverse candidates for the NASAA board, specifically people of color; people under 50 years of age; people from the South; people from U.S. jurisdictions; and people with federal political relationships, strong advocacy skills and diversity of thought across the political spectrum. NASAA's board nomination process was recently revised to reduce barriers to participation, so that application forms are simplified and nominators write statements of support for prospective candidates. Two of NASAA's three FY2023 board candidates are people of color and two live in conservative states.
- Collected specific information about SAA programming, policy and political challenges in the DEI realm through field interviews with 83 SAA executive directors and council chairs. This data informed NASAA's strategic planning and action planning efforts and has been shared transparently with the field.
- Facilitated wider access to NASAA governance practices by promoting open attendance to NASAA board meetings, starting with the September meeting in Kansas City.
- After an extensive RFP process, NASAA selected Team Dynamics to conduct our organizational equity audit. This multiyear effort, commencing in 2022, will thoroughly examine NASAA's governance, operations, programs and communications and will result in an action plan to advance equity at NASAA.
- Applied an anti-bias lens to NASAA's editorial standards and practices. Ensured that images used in NASAA communications represent multiple dimensions of diversity.

- Periodically updated the Inclusive Language Guide and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources web page.
- Maintained a directory of DEI facilitators, trainers and consultants.
- NASAA's staff team completed extensive internal training on uprooting bias, responding to conflict and inclusive facilitation as well as an introduction to somatic justice.
- Continued monthly staff anti-racism meetings to discuss current DEI issues.
- Strengthened NASAA's recruitment practices to identify specific action steps NASAA will take to encourage diversity in engaging contractors and vendors.
- NASAA updated all our job descriptions to include specific DEI related tasks for every position.
- The Audit Committee oversaw the RFP process and reengagement of NASAA's auditor, SB & Company, one of the largest minority-owned public accounting firms in the United States.
- Worked collaboratively with Grantmakers in the Arts:
    - NASAA's CEO codesigned the multifaceted Cultural Policy Action Lab. She also cocurated and moderated the related Grantmakers in the Arts Cultural Policy Action Lab webinar, which focused on advancing racial equity through arts, culture and public policy.
    - NASAA led a conference session on Equitable Economic Recovery through the Arts at the Grantmakers in the Arts Plurality, Power and Belonging virtual convening. The session featured representatives from Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña and Fundación Ángel Ramos.
    - NASAA described public-sector grant strategies prioritizing underserved communities during the Grantmakers in the Arts February 2022 Research on Support for Arts and Culture webinar.
- NASAA's creative aging partnership with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy (formerly Aroha Philanthropies), Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging, continued to help state arts agencies reduce ageism in their programs and services and promote creative aging programs and lifelong learning for older adults.
- NASAA collaborated with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a webinar illustrating how the arts can intersect with HUD's Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program, which is designed to expand affordable housing and build inclusive and sustainable communities.
- Several of the blog stories featured in NASAA's collaboration with the National League of Cities focused on equity aspects of community development and public health.
- NASAA's research team provided feedback to the NEA on project beneficiary-by-race data, describing the limitations of data currently collected and how the information is being used by NASAA and SAAs.
- NASAA chaired the Arts Education Partnership Equity Working Group. The group is a professional community that gathers to support ongoing learning and dialogue related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access among national arts education organizations that are affiliated with AEP.

- NASAA cochaired The Art of Community: Rural SC, a South Carolina Arts Commission program that supports new leadership, generates energy and motivates action in South Carolina's rural communities.
- Supplied feedback on the NEA strategic plan, emphasizing the opportunity to provide federal leadership for equity efforts in the arts field.
- NASAA participated in the emerging BIPOC-led arts advocacy coalition meetings.
- 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. As of May 2022, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color on NASAA's board and staff:
    - In October 2015, 10% of the NASAA board was made up of people of color. As of May 2022, 55% of the FY2022 NASAA board is comprised of people of color.
    - In October 2015, 16% of the NASAA staff was made up of people of color. To date, 47% of the NASAA staff are people of color.

# FY2023

- In collaboration with the Illinois Arts Council, NASAA launched the Illinois Equitable Grant-making Assessment Initiative (EGAIN). Modeled after the Equity GAP Project piloted with Ohio in 2022, EGAIN will assess the agency's grant-making practices through an equity lens. The study will involve extensive constituent consultation as well as a robust geospatial analysis of Illinois grant investments in rural, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and/or people of color), disabled and low-income communities. Recommendations will identify policy and practice actions the agency can take to advance funding equity statewide.

- NASAA began a new initiative, Strengthening State Arts Agency Relationships with Native Communities, to help our member agencies foster meaningful connections with Indigenous artists, Native organizations and tribal governments. We formed an Indigenous Circle of Advisors to guide our efforts, and have conducted more than 20 interviews to date with Native culture bearers, Native nonprofits, tribal liaisons and state offices of tribal relations, among others.

- Through our legislative scanning process, NASAA tracked bills 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 supported the efforts of the People of Color Affinity Group for state arts agency staff and council members who identify as people of color. This year the staff supported leadership from the field and conducted planning for quarterly group convenings. The affinity group leadership consists of cochairs and an advisor representing state arts

agency staff and council members.

- Numerous peer group activities revolved around DEI. Quarterly calls of executive directors, deputy directors, accessibility coordinators, grants officers, community development coordinators and public information officers explored issues relating to equitable grant making and ways of advancing DEI work within state government.

- NASAA convened a special session for executive directors facing arts controversies or policy challenges related to their own DEI work or the activities undertaken by grantees working on LGBTQ+ or BIPOC issues.

- The arts education managers' DEI+A (including access) Subcommittee hosts quarterly sessions for state arts agency arts education managers. These sessions provide a forum for sharing resources and strategies to advance equitable education as well as equitable state arts agency services for educators, teaching artists and other education stakeholders.

- NASAA answered numerous DEI information requests from members. Topics included DEI planning, metrics and measurement, equitable grant making, and program design for underserved communities.

- We featured DEI resources in every issue of our NASAA Notes newsletter. We shared resources on a wide range of topics including artist income and wage equity, equity assessment methods, strategies for supporting BIPOC leaders, and facilitating organizational change around DEI goals.

- NASAA's State to State resource elevates examples of state arts agencies' DEI work. Selected program profiles added this year include New Mexico's Bosque Redondo Memorial residency, Indiana's grant-making evaluation efforts, Alaska's Youth Cultural Heritage program, Texas and South Carolina's rural support strategies, Oklahoma's capitol exhibit program, and Pennsylvania and Utah's creative aging portfolios.

- NASAA is working on a significant upgrade to our Visualizing Equity in Grant Making dashboards. We're streamlining the user interface and adding new data elements to help state arts agencies better understand the population demographics, economic status and social vulnerability (as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) of communities they are reaching through grant funds.

- NASAA maintained the currency of the Inclusive Language Guide and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources web page.

- Our creative aging partnership with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy continued to combat ageism and support important state level work in helping to extend creative aging

services to historically under-resourced communities. We completed an independent evaluation of the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative and launched a new phase of work in States Leading Creative Aging. This new program supports continued professional development programs for all 56 states and jurisdictions and invests **$95,000** grant awards to nine states for leadership level work with creative aging partners.

- NASAA is developing new analyses that will provide further insights into the distribution of SAA grants and equity considerations. New geographic analyses will examine the national distribution of state arts agency grants at the census tract level. These will provide a granular view of SAA grant data across the Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index and the American Community Survey's percentage of population below the poverty line. Other new factsheets will examine SAA operating Support grantees by organization budget size and overlapping grantees between the NEA and SAAs.

- NASAA launched a multiyear Equity Audit engaging NASAA staff, board and membership. Board members were interviewed about governance topics by our equity advisors at Team Dynamics. Board and staff participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory assessment process. More than a dozen focus groups were conducted with member peer groups to invite feedback and gain insights into equity issues and challenges facing our association. Also, annual interviews of state arts agency leaders allow for the inclusion of executive and council chair level input about NASAA's DEI portfolio.

- We conducted an accessibility audit of the NASAA website, to improve its utility for individuals with limited vision. We're making a number of adjustments to improve the visitor experience and align with accessible-interface standards.

- 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. FY2023 activities included a review of NASAA's priorities regarding board composition and attributes needed.

- To support work on our new Native Communities initiative, NASAA staff participated in self-directed learning about the history, culture and governance structures of Native peoples.

- NASAA conducted a board demographics survey.

- Our editorial 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 served as a resource for the BIPOC-led Arts Advocacy Coalition at the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures federal advocacy summit.

- NASAA's CEO continues to represent NASAA and SAAs in the Grantmakers in the Arts Cultural Policy Action Lab.

- NASAA continues to support inclusive excellence in its work with the Creative States Coalition (CSC) and BIPOC-led Arts Advocacy Coalition (BLAAC).

- NASAA President and CEO Pam Breaux participated in the Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Puerto Rico – The Diaspora, The Island webinar. The webinar served as the first of many conversations among GIA members about unlearning the narrative that Puerto Rico is solely a destination island. The webinar was designed to help prepare GIA members for their fall conference in Puerto Rico.

- NASAA presented the findings from the Equity GAP Project at the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations conference. NASAA brought a public-sector lens to the Courageous Unlearning conference, a national forum for funders to explore ways of dismantling systemic funding inequities.

- 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. As of May 2023, we note the following about the inclusion of people of color at NASAA:

    - As of May 2023, 59% of the NASAA board is comprised of people of color. As of the same date, approximately 40% of the staff is comprised of people of color.

For current-year activities, see Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities at NASAA.