



THE STATUS AND FUTURE  
OF STATE ARTS  
ADVOCACY

DENVER, CO  
OCTOBER 3-5, 2016

The Sixteenth Symposium of the  
Western States Arts Federation

WESTAF

# **The Status and Future of State Arts Advocacy Symposium Proceedings**

The 2016 Symposium of the Western States Arts Federation  
October 3-5, 2016  
Denver, CO

## **Symposium Director**

Anthony Radich

## **Proceedings Editor**

Laurel Sherman

## **Contributing Editors**

Sonja K. Foss

Anthony Radich

Natalie Villa

## **Cover Design**

Natalie Villa

For permission requests, please contact WESTAF (the Western States Arts Federation) at the address below:

WESTAF (Western States Arts Federation)  
1743 Wazee Street, Suite 300  
Denver, CO 80202

Phone: 303-629-1166

Fax: 303-629-9717

Email: [staff@westaf.org](mailto:staff@westaf.org)

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## About the Project Sponsor

### **WESTAF**

WESTAF (The Western States Arts Federation) is a regional nonprofit arts service organization dedicated to the creative advancement and preservation of the arts. WESTAF fulfills its mission to strengthen the financial, organizational, and policy infrastructure of the arts in the West by engaging in arts policy research and state arts agency development; developing innovative programs, services, and technology solutions; and supporting programming for artists and arts organizations. WESTAF regularly convenes experts and leaders around critical issues affecting the arts and cultural policy. Historically, the organization has been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). In addition to NEA funding, today WESTAF is significantly supported through an array of technology-based earned-income programs.

Founded in 1974 as a project of the Western Governor's Association, WESTAF is now an independent nonprofit organization. Located in Denver, Colorado, WESTAF serves the largest geographical area and number of states of the six U.S. regional arts organizations. WESTAF's constituents include the state arts agencies, artists, and arts organizations of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

WESTAF remains committed to the improvement of the capacity and quality of the public funding of the arts by the state arts agencies of the West. Position papers, advisory research, and professional development services are regularly provided to these agencies. WESTAF is also an experienced technology developer and has originated and now manages seven distinct online projects that benefit the arts and creative industries. As a progressive and evolving organization, WESTAF initiates new programs and projects regularly and is proud to have artists and arts administrators on staff.

# Introduction to the 2016 Symposium on State Arts Advocacy

Anthony Radich, Executive Director, WESTAF

This symposium was organized by WESTAF because our organization very much believes in the value of state-level support for the arts. Because of this belief, over the past 11 years, WESTAF leadership has allocated more than \$1 million to support advocacy on behalf of state arts agencies. The focus of this support is on the underwriting of professional lobbyists in each WESTAF-region state. Although placing lobbyists at the state level can and has made a difference, we have discovered that, in most states, the support structure that needs to undergird the work of lobbyists is quite weak. In fact, in many states, it is non-existent. This symposium was organized to explore ways in which state arts-advocacy efforts in the region can be more successful. When they are teamed with an effective lobbyist and a collaborating state arts agency, significant progress is likely to be made in the area of state-level support for the arts.

Prior to organizing this symposium, we knew that state-level arts advocacy was not exemplary; however, after conducting a national survey of the state of state arts-advocacy organizations, we were surprised at how underdeveloped the field was. Looking at the data that serve as one measure of the effectiveness of state arts advocacy, one is tempted to declare an “advocacy emergency.” Although difficult to believe, national aggregate state legislative appropriations to state arts agencies have not returned to the level they were 15 years ago. Something seems seriously amiss here, and not much appears to be being done about it. We need to recognize that one very big thing that is wrong with state-level arts advocacy is that the national level arts service organizations that should be heavily invested in creating a dynamic and successful state arts-advocacy network are not stepping up to the task. We know that some of the lack of success with the advocacy groups is the result of chronic tensions between those groups and state arts agency leaders. However, one would think that the lack of budget progress across the field would galvanize national leaders into action—but apparently not.

Although the state arts-advocacy field as a whole is one of modest accomplishment, there are examples in the field of significant successes that could serve as models for learning. Massachusetts has perhaps the most active and progressive arts-advocacy organization in the nation. Highly successful, the focus of the group is on improving the quality of life for the residents of Massachusetts and not merely on saving the funding of a state arts agency. In Minnesota, the arts-advocacy group works in tandem with the state arts agency to maintain a statewide initiative that funnels a bountiful amount of money to the arts. In Ohio, the relationship between the state arts agency and the state arts-advocacy organization has always been one of political realism and a willingness to take the steps needed to advance—and they have. Finally, in California, although the arts-advocacy organization is quite small, the California Arts Advocates have enjoyed considerable success through a multi-year collaboration with the state arts agency and members of the state legislature. There are other success stories, but not too many.

While there are things to be learned from the successful state arts-advocacy organizations, one important lesson is that there is no single recipe for success, and in this field, some of the old and very traditional advocacy organization models are some of the most successful. So developing new models may be helpful, but they are not essential. The challenge appears to be finding ways to plant and nurture both old and new models in the many states that have nonexistent or ineffective advocacy organizations.

I think we all know that advocacy organizations need to collaborate with a savvy state arts agency in order to succeed. And this is a challenge that I noted in the symposium. During the symposium dialogue, I offered up the image of state arts agencies as being something like meteorites that accidentally fall from outer space and plunge into state government. Once there, they do their best to define themselves as apart from the host entity. Eventually, many take on the attributes of alien objects accidentally sitting within state government. I mention this because my observation is that state arts agencies, with some exceptions, have not embraced the benefits and potential powers of state government. Instead, they tend to view state government as an obstruction to their work. That “I-am-a-foreign-object” approach is why we observe so few innovative funding ideas emerging from the arts agencies even though states are filled with innovative funding ideas and practices for a wide array of endeavors. Many state arts agencies relish being far from the orbit of politics and state bureaucracy, and I propose that they suffer because of this. This lack of a willingness to embrace the powers of state government has helped perpetuate the lack of forward movement by the arts agencies. This attitude toward state government, I propose, has also made advocacy for the agencies very difficult in that the advocates are often limited to supporting tired old ideas that have limited traction with elected officials and state bureaucracies.

In spite of the mire in which state arts-advocacy efforts find themselves, there are ways to move forward. Some that immediately come to mind are:

- Regional arts organizations (RAOs) could become much more involved in the state arts-advocacy efforts in their regions. The RAOs could target certain states for arts-advocacy improvement and direct funds and consulting support to those efforts. Taking on one or two states at a time, the RAOs could help rebuild the state arts-advocacy network over the next five or six years. Such a shared effort would distribute the financial and administrative responsibility for rebuilding the network and make the effort possible.
- National service organizations such as Americans for the Arts need to either seriously invest in state-level arts advocacy or get out of the way. The weakness of the field requires more than periodic convenings and infrequent consultative run-outs. There needs to be a national level policy and financial commitment to state arts advocacy that is not now present.



- Today's successful models of state arts advocacy are varied. In this variation, there is strength, and I believe that the tendency to create rigid frameworks for state arts-advocacy groups must be avoided. State arts-advocacy networks can bloom in many different ways, so let them.
- Advocacy that is long and sustained must have strong leadership. While that leadership can come from the staff of state arts-advocacy organizations or state arts agencies, it needs to be more broad based and come from community leaders and elected officials who are passionate about this subject. I would argue that the advocacy field is in short supply in this area and needs to reflect on why the effort does not appeal to a broader group as a compelling activity in which to be involved.

There is much work to do, and there are great people to do it. The advocacy leaders WESTAF brought to the symposium represent some—but not all—of the talent that is available to rekindle state arts advocacy in a way that strengthens the field. At WESTAF, we will continue to consider ways to expand support for state arts-advocacy efforts. This symposium helped inform our organization as to how it should best invest its resources in such work. Because public support for the arts is so important to the arts community, WESTAF will continue to build state arts advocacy so that it can properly support public sector involvement in the arts.

## Symposium Participants

**Cristina Aguilar**

Executive Director  
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity  
and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)  
Denver, Colorado

**Janet Brown**

President and CEO  
Grantmakers in the Arts  
Seattle, Washington

**Pam Breaux**

Chief Executive Officer  
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies  
Washington, D.C.

**Brian J. Carter**

Heritage Lead  
4Culture  
Seattle, Washington

**Donna Collins**

Executive Director  
Ohio Arts Council  
Columbus, Ohio

**Brad Erickson**

Executive Director  
Theatre Bay Area  
San Francisco, California

**Catherine “Rusty” Foley**

Executive Director  
Arizona Citizens for the Arts  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Sue Gens**

Executive Director  
Minnesota State Arts Board  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

**Virginia Gowski**

Chair, WESTAF  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Erin Graham**

Chief Operating Officer  
Oregon Museum of Science and Industry  
Portland, Oregon

**Michael Hillerby**

Director of Legislative Affairs  
Kaempfer Crowell  
Reno, Nevada

**Kimberly Howard**

Community Education Specialist  
Portland General Electric Foundation  
Portland, Oregon

**Sofia Klatzker**

Executive Director  
Arts for LA  
Los Angeles, California

**Larry Meeker**

Chair  
Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission  
Topeka, Kansas

**Anthony Radich**

Executive Director  
WESTAF  
Denver, Colorado

**Richard Stein**

Executive Director  
Arts Orange County  
Santa Ana, California

**Tim Storey**  
Director of State Services  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
Denver, Colorado

**Craig Watson**  
Director  
California Arts Council  
Sacramento, California

**John White**  
InHouse Consultants, Inc.  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**Matthew Wilson**  
Executive Director  
MASSCreative  
Boston, Massachusetts

## Presentations and Discussions

**Keynote Presentation:** *Trends in State Government that Will Impact the Future of State-Level Arts Advocacy*

Tim Storey, Director of State Services, National Conference of State Legislatures

**Tim Storey:** I am a certifiable election dork. I have a certificate at home that says “Election Dork.” I obsess over the polls—I love this stuff. I work for all 7,383 of the state legislators in this country. They come from one end of the political and cultural spectrum to the other and everywhere in between.

I am going to talk about three things in terms of trends because elections are points in a trend. I will also talk about state budgets. We have some great, fairly new data about 2017 state budgets and beyond. I think that information will probably provide some helpful context for this symposium. Finally, I want to talk about some policy trends that will impact policies made in state governments in the coming year. Before I start, I want to conduct a little poll—just to get a sense of the group—because there haven't been enough polls this season, right? How many of you have heard about a polling result today? There were something like 48 polls released today, by the way.

### **Election Trends**

How many of you watched the debate last week? I want to get a sense of how engaged all of you are as voters. Almost everybody here seems engaged in this election. How many know who your member of Congress is? How many of you know who your state legislator is? How many of you know which Congressional District you live in? Get out of here! That is really impressive.

This is for the real election dorks in the group. Who knows this answer? Don't blurt it out; just raise your hand. Who was the last Republican president elected to the White House without someone named *Nixon* or *Bush* on the ticket? Anybody? Not Eisenhower; Nixon was his vice president. Tricky. Hoover! Herbert Hoover. Were the Hoover days good days? I met Herbert Hoover's great great great nephew last night. It's a very bizarre story, but I'll save that for later.

This is a big election year, but it is always a big election year. There are 12 governors up for election this time around. The governors are on four-year terms, for the most part, and they cycle every four years. Approximately 36 of them are up for election during the midterm of the president. We have 12 governor races this year, and, frankly, not a ton of action on some of those, but there are really about 5 of them that are truly toss-ups.

The real action is with the legislators. Over 80% or 5,119 of legislative seats are up this election. This is not unusual because legislators tend to be up for election or re-election every two years, especially in the lower houses of state government. Most of the state senates have some kind of staggered four-year term. But there are four states—Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, and New Jersey—that elect their legislators in the odd number of years, so they skip this year.

Then there are two states where both the House and the Senate have four-year terms, and they are elected in the mid-term. Those are Alabama and Maryland. So there are six states with legislative election practices that fall outside the norm. One other twist is that in Michigan, only the House is up. In addition to the large number of state legislators up for election, all 435 U.S. House seats and one-third of the U.S. Senate are up for election, and then there are 51 elections for the presidency. Most people think we have one national election for the presidency but, in fact, there are 50 state elections plus DC, so there are really 51 presidential elections.

I will not say much about the race for the White House except that race will have a huge impact on state legislative elections. This is the case because, over the last eight years under the Obama administration, Democrats have lost over 850 seats in state legislatures. It has been a tough eight years for Democratic state legislators. However, it has been worse for the party in power. Eisenhower lost more state legislative [Republican] seats in his eight years in office than Obama did in his eight years. But the loss under Obama is substantial. The Democrats lost 24 legislative chambers in 2010 during Obama's first midterm. Then the Democrats lost another 12 or so in the last midterm election. As a result, they had a net loss of 30 seats.

Midterm election losses for the party in the White House go back to 1902. There have been 29 election cycles in the midterms of presidents. One of the most consistent trends in American politics is that the party in the White House loses seats in state legislatures and also in Congress. This has not, however, been consistently the case in the U.S. House. The result of all this over the past many years is that the Republicans have attained one of the strongest positions they have held in state and federal politics.

Today, there are more Republican state legislative chambers than ever before. Nebraska has a unicameral legislature—only a Senate. It is the only state with such a system. Nebraska's senators are also nonpartisan and actually run on a nonpartisan ticket. But since we are here among friends, they are Republicans. They pretend to be nonpartisan, but there are more nonpartisan Republicans than nonpartisan Democrats, so we will just leave it at that.

Technically, there are 67 legislative chambers that are Republican. That is actually misleading because the New York Senate is controlled by the Republicans with the assistance of five dissident Democrats who have voted with the Republicans. Then you have Nebraska—so it is actually 69 chambers controlled by the GOP out of the 99 chambers, which is the most in the history of the Republican party. Republicans control more legislative chambers now than at any time since Lincoln. This is a pretty good time for the Republican legislatures. They control approximately 4,000 seats—roughly 55% of all legislative seats. There are a handful of third parties in state legislatures; however, third-party legislators make up less than 0.3% of all state legislative seats. So they are not going to be a factor until they perhaps break through to become 1% of all legislators.

Republicans are at their highest point since 1920 (Warren G. Harding—remember the Harding administration?). This is the most Republican group of legislators since the Harding presidency. The Republicans are definitely riding high.

However, the Democrats dominated state legislatures for 50 years. After Watergate, they controlled almost 70% of all state legislative seats. Even though Republicans are at their highest point in history, they are still not as dominant as the Democrats were when they controlled the state legislatures.

Where does that leave us? In 30 states, Republicans control both the House and Senate. In 12 states, the Democrats control both houses of the state legislature. Republicans are riding high as legislators head into this election cycle. Another way to look at this phenomenon is that the GOP has become a predominantly rural party in many places. In fact, there are very few rural Democrats left who are not African American or Hispanic. If you look at a map, these Democrat elected officials are located in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas and selected districts in rural North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and the Mississippi Delta.

Democrats have largely been moved into urban and suburban districts around the country. The big move came about in the South in 1992, which, in my mind, is not that long ago. In that year, every state legislature in the South was Democratic. Today, every state legislature in the South, save one, is Republican. The Kentucky House, where Democrats have a three-seat advantage, is the only state legislative chamber in the South that the Democrats still control. In this election, that one will be a toss-up.

What is interesting about the coming election is that there are relatively fewer battleground states where one party has the potential to take over from the other party. That is because the GOP has been so successful. They are so far up right now that it will be difficult for the Democrats—even if there is a big wave or a movement for the Democrats this year—for them to win majorities.

Over the last decade and a half, in terms of state legislative elections, Washington state has been the most competitive. Both chambers have gone back and forth. I think the House there has switched four out of the last five election cycles. I can't tell you who is going to win there this year. I think it is a classic toss-up. The mail-in ballot there will, I think, potentially make a difference. Washington state has become a nearly all mail-in ballot state. Oregon also has all mail-in ballots. Colorado has the option.

Colorado is definitely a battleground state. The House there is controlled by Democrats by only a two-seat advantage. If it flips by just three, that would give the Republicans a majority. The Senate there is controlled by only one seat. There are actually six chambers where one seat will switch control. So one seat matters a great deal in this election cycle, including the Colorado Senate and the Washington House—and, I think, the Washington Senate as well. Also in Washington, there is a dissident Democrat who would caucus with the Republicans on the House side, so it is actually even more complicated. I think the Republicans are pretty concerned about holding the Senate there, but they think they can.

On average, in every two-year election cycle, 13 legislative chambers switch hands. The lesson from that is: Be nice to minority leaders because they will someday be known as Mr. or Ms. Speaker. Don't think you should only play to the majority because it will eventually change. That said, the Kentucky House has not switched since 1922, and the Maryland House has never switched—it has always been Democratic. Utah is now technically the most Republican state of all state legislatures. It was formerly Idaho. These days, they pass the distinction back and forth.

Who here is from Kansas? You have three Republican parties in Kansas. I think that is one of the biggest issues from a political meta standpoint at the moment. That issue is: What happens to the Republican party after this election? I am an honest-to-goodness nonpartisan. I have lots of friends in both parties, and I work well with all of them. The GOP has a serious problem. They know it. We will talk about that in a minute.

You are going to see a lot of change. Democrats are definitely going to pick up seats. The question is: Can they flip the chambers? We know 13 seats switch on average, but the Republicans have a legitimate shot to win the Iowa Senate. If I had to guess right now, I would say they would. They are leading in absentee ballots unlike they ever have before. The Bernie people in Iowa are just not as engaged as they were four years ago and four years before that. In Iowa, you can readily flip from Democrats to Republicans. And then the Kentucky House . . . I do not know how they have managed to hang on as long as they have, but Mitch McConnell, who is the U.S. Senate majority leader, has been campaigning for many of these Kentucky legislative candidates to help them raise money. He and the governor are bound and determined to flip that Kentucky House.

Then there are the races for governor. What we see here are not the same historic highs as exist in legislatures, but again, it is a GOP world when you look at the state governors' map—31 governors are Republican, 18 are Democrats, and 1 (in Alaska) is an independent. In terms of the competitiveness of those races, most of the races in the West are locked in. In the Oregon and Washington races, the Democrats pretty much have those. Utah is going to go Republican. In Montana, the incumbent Democrat figured out how to obtain an NRA endorsement, and that will keep him in office.

All of the competitive races for governor are not in the West. There are several cognitive dissonant states in which a super red state elects a Democratic governor or a super blue state elects a Republican governor. Louisiana, which has a Democratic governor, is a very red state. In fact, it is one of the reddest states. There are also Republican governors in Massachusetts and Maryland, two of the most Democratic states in the country.

When you put it all together, the situation for Democrats is not that great. If you are a Democrat, there are only eight states where Democrats run the world by controlling the House, the Senate, and the governorship. I also observe a very Republican policy agenda. The Republicans have clearly accomplished what they have set out to do. They have proposed and passed conservative social legislation and conservative budgets and lowered taxes in many cases. Kansas is a special situation.

There, the Republicans said what they were going to do, got elected, and then did what they said they were going to do. The result has been a great deal of financial difficulty for the state.

In the upcoming election, the top of the ticket really does matter. In the latest polls out this afternoon, CNN's poll showed Hillary leading by five points. But some of the state polls that came out today were not so great for Hillary. Given the events of the past week, the debate and all that has happened, the pundits would say there should have been a big surge for Hillary. However, the vote is still very close in Pennsylvania and even closer in Michigan and Wisconsin. The path for her to win in these 51 elections has to include Michigan and Wisconsin.

### **Policy Trends**

There are a number of interesting ballot measures this election cycle. Minimum wage is on the ballot in five states. Advocates seek to increase it in four of the states and decrease it in South Dakota for teenagers only. By the way, three of these measures have almost identical language, so this is not a coincidence.

Taxes are the big thing on the ballot this election cycle. In this legislative environment, where it is occasionally impossible to get anything related to a tax increase done, if going to the ballot is an option, which it is in many western states, that is the way to go. There is a proposed tax increase called the *Millionaire's Tax* in California. Actually, it is a proposal to renew what already exists and will impact people making \$250,000 or more, so it is not really a *millionaire's* tax, and that is what the opposition has been saying. Four of the proposed tax increases are tobacco taxes. In addition, Oklahoma is voting on a one-cent sales-tax increase—a pretty major event in that state because its severance taxes have been crushed with oil and gas prices remaining so low. There are also a number of firearm restrictions on the ballot. These include ammunition bans and background checks, among other things. All represent pushbacks on firearms.

Also on the ballot this year are measures related to elections. In Maine, Paul LePage, the not-very-popular governor, was elected as a third-party candidate. A proposal would change the rules to not allow that to happen again. The change would be to a ranked-choice system. For example, voters would declare that they want Bernie Sanders for president, but if he does not make the cut in the first tally, the same voters want their vote to go to Hillary Clinton. I have no idea how it is polling or if it is going to work or not. But the proposal is very interesting; no state currently has it. The voting system would also apply to elections for federal-level officials, for whom the states are allowed to set the rules.

I am surprised we have Californians here. In that state, the voter information book is 229 pages long. It is the longest it has ever been, so you should be in your room studying. In California, there are 25 measures statewide. If you are in San Francisco, there are another 30 or so. It is probably the longest voter-information book in history because of the marijuana initiative, which appears to be widely supported.



In Nebraska, where the legislature abolished the death penalty, there is a proposal to reinstate it. This is the kind of ballot measure that comes about through a citizen petition to undo a law or statute. Colorado has a single-payer health plan, which is almost certainly going to fail. Most of the liberal groups have come out against it because of the technicalities of how it would be implemented. Colorado is also voting on assisted suicide or an end-of-life measure. California has a measure on the pricing of drugs. It is a very big deal with a lot of money attached to it. There is a measure in California to ban plastic bags and take the revenues earned from selling paper bags and transfer them to an environmental fund. Then there is the *Condoms in Pornographic Films Initiative* in California. The California initiatives are important because they frequently make their way to other states.

This reminds me of a big tip I will share with you regarding passing legislation. We conduct trainings for legislative committee chairs, especially when they have experienced a flip and a different party controls one of the houses. I tell them, “If you have a bill you really like, wait for the day when you have some nutty ‘all the cameras’ kind of thing. Tuck your bill right behind it on the agenda. Then, because everybody is so worn out, they’re like, ‘Yeah, whatever. Pass it.’ Insert your proposal immediately after the crazy thing, and it runs it right through every time.”

This is the year of weed and marijuana; it is on the ballot in many places. There are 10 measures on the ballot in 9 states. I like my job and I would like to keep it. I was quoted as saying, “It’s the year of weed!” and I saw that in print in a major newspaper and I was like, “Boy, that was not what I wanted to say.” But it is kind of true. This year, we have the greatest number of ballot measures around one issue—marijuana—than we have seen since all the proposed same-sex marriage bans. Those bans were often said to be placed on the ballot to drive turnout. I do not know if the marijuana proposals are on the ballot to drive turnout per se, but if they pass, we will have more than one third of Americans—over one hundred million people—who live in a state jurisdiction where they would be allowed to legally use recreational marijuana in violation of federal law. This is something the federal government is going to have to deal with at some point.

I want to say something now about legislative demographics. As many of you know, more than half of Americans are women: 51%. However, only 24% of state legislators are women. I think this is something we are going to see change, maybe in this election. This is a big issue, and I believe legislatures simply do not reflect the United States. Thirteen percent of the population of the United States are African American, but only 9% of state legislators are African American. Seventeen percent of Americans are Latino, but only 5% of state legislators are Latino. Legislatures are woefully underrepresented. There are a couple of states with only two women in the Chamber—South Carolina, for example.

The trend line for women in state legislatures is that they comprised less than 5% of state legislators all the way through the 1970s. Then the number grew rapidly all the way through the ‘80s and ‘90s, and then—boom!—it just plateaued in the 2000s at around 24%. It is really interesting that women had so much success in terms of breaking into state legislatures and then just sort of froze.

A few trends: The top of the ticket makes a big difference because those items can really swamp some of these really close legislative races. I think that is going to happen in some places. We will see that boost of turnout, and the electorate is going to change.

For the first time in American history, fewer than 70% of all voters will be white. More than 30% will be minorities. That would bode well for Hillary Clinton, one would think, because she is leading in all of those demographic categories. Barack Obama won women 55% to 44%, by 11%. But Romney won white women by 14%. But, last I checked, Hillary was tied with white women, so I think women are going to decide the election—as they often do—white women in the suburbs.

The GOP's biggest challenge is themselves. They have just had so much success the last few election cycles, it is hard for them to make ground. I think the big question is: What happens to the Republican party after this election? I am hearing that question posed all over the country by Republican leaders.

### **Budget Trends**

Let's talk about budgets. As most of you know, states rely primarily on sales taxes and personal income tax for their budgets; they make up more than 60% of all state budget revenues. The other revenue sources are fees and that kind of thing. What percentage of such appropriations are for arts? It has got to be like a fraction of a percent, right? Very small.

By the way, the big thing here is the Medicaid piece of the state budget pie. That slice was 7% less than 20 years ago. It is now 20%. Medicaid is killing everything because it is such a big chunk of the budget, and it has grown so fast. What can we expect in the next couple of years? At the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), we just completed our survey of legislative fiscal officers, so we have some pretty good data on this. What is interesting is that general revenue went up almost 2% in FY16. Currently, states are projecting a 3% increase in general fund growth for FY17. That is pretty good. But here is the problem: General spending on things that have to be funded continues to grow faster than the revenue is growing. Most of this, again, is Medicaid. As a result, it is very difficult to have money left over.

For 2017, a 4% increase in Medicaid expenses is projected. We just saw revenues growing at 3%, but at 20%, Medicaid is a huge part of the budget. Also, K-12 takes up another 35% of the state budgets. So 3% revenue growth does not help much when you have continuing growth across the mandated state spending categories. So guess what? There is no money for arts out there. But I am sure they will find some. There is no money for anything; that is my main point.

This is a year in which there is a significant drawing down of the balances of rainy day funds. Texas and Alaska had large reserve funds, and Alaska is eating into its fund at a fast rate. At the conclusion of 2009, states had less than 2% of their budgets set aside in rainy day reserve funds. The states are experiencing the impact of slow growth, and they have not rebuilt their rainy day funds back to pre-recession levels. However, they are making good progress, especially if Alaska and Texas are not included in the analysis.

Overall, the states are experiencing a steady improvement in fiscal health. Today, there are better opportunities for funding things. However, the states are not as fiscally healthy as they were just 10 years ago.

Some states have enough money to run their governments if revenues decline or expenses increase unexpectedly. Kansas can run its government for only two days on its reserve. Pennsylvania is the next worst, being able to only cover 4.5% of its budget, and Illinois is at 10%. When Illinois has a better budget number than you do, you have got some soul searching to do. Those big 50-state numbers related to rainy day funds do not necessarily reflect the status of states like Illinois, Kansas, and Pennsylvania. Generally, however, state fiscal health is slowly making its way back.

In the revenue projection, people were fairly conservative in their estimates of the growth in personal income tax. The analysts with whom I have spoken think the economy is starting to improve and that revenues from this source might actually tick up. There may be more money there than they are thinking.

Let's talk about policy trends. It is too early to see what the policy trends are for 2017 because so much relies on the elections, what people are talking about, and the big themes that emerge from the election. But I will say a few things. Budgets are always the number-one issue in a legislature. That is just the way it is. Everything is budget related. More than a third of all bills are related to budgets.

Job creation is a topic at the moment, and relating your advocacy to that effort is going to be advantageous. The more you relate arts to attracting businesses and companies to a state, the more I think you strengthen your hand. When you get a CEO to attend meetings of elected officials and say that one of the reasons they are looking at your state is because you have this vibrant civic life, that can only help. I think the connection between the arts and job creation is very important, and I do not believe that emphasis in the legislature will go away anytime soon.

There is a large conversation in state legislatures about the opioid crisis. I am not sure the topic relates much to the arts, but it is a clue as to what many legislatures have at the top of their agenda. Policing is another topic that is attracting a great deal of attention. Transportation funding also continues to be a popular topic.

Another topic in state legislatures will again depend on who wins the presidential election. If Hillary wins, she will be expected to fill [Antonin] Scalia's spot on the Supreme Court. One of the early cases the Supreme Court will take up is a redistricting case related to gerrymandering. Gerrymandering has been around since before the republic, and I would not be surprised to see the Supreme Court find a way to rein in parts of gerrymandering. I think that is a big change that is going to happen if Hillary is elected president. There was one Supreme Court case in Pennsylvania in 2007, where the court was divided 5-4 with Kennedy in the middle, and he sided to maintain our current system. He said there was no way to measure how evil gerrymandering was. But the four liberals clearly wanted to overturn it.

That is something I think you are going to see change. In addition, a number of campaign-finance cases are going to be considered at the court, especially if there is a new Hillary Clinton-appointed justice.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the arts community that looks to state legislatures to partially underwrite their work through state arts agencies faces an ongoing challenge. Although fiscal conditions in the states have improved, mandated expenditures in the states have increased at a rate greater than state revenues, thus largely eradicating any net gains states might otherwise experience. In addition, nationwide, the Republicans have control over more houses of state legislatures and governorships than they have had in a very long time. Although Republicans can and have been supportive of public funding for the arts, the party has a strong wing of fiscal conservatives interested in controlling and/or reducing the size of state government. This strong political undercurrent does not bode well for arts advocates who seek to increase state funding for the arts. One way to address the current crop of elected officials is to focus on the job-creating aspects of the arts and to work with state legislators to craft solutions to the evergreen challenge of job creation. Job-creation-oriented arguments are likely to appeal to the current group of state legislators far more than quality-of-life and art for art's sake arguments. The road ahead looks pretty difficult for arts advocates. They will need to be very skilled in order to retain their current budget allocations, let alone grow them in state government.

## **Opening Remarks**

Co-Facilitators: Kimberly Howard, Community Education Specialist, Portland General Electric Foundation and Larry Meeker, Chair, Kansas Creative Industries Commission

**Kimberly Howard:** I am from the great state of Oregon, where I had the opportunity to work at the Oregon Cultural Trust. There, I was introduced to arts advocacy and cultural advocacy at a very deep level. Oregon's Cultural Trust is the result of innovative policy development and legislation. The bill establishing the Trust is in the same league as the bottle bill and vote-by-mail, which are other policy innovations Oregon made famous.

In Oregon, for many years, we have had the Business Committee for the Arts. That effort has now concluded, and I believe that, as a result, we have lost a central community focus for advocacy. The situation reminds me a little bit of what my parents might have talked about in terms of the Civil Rights movement. The African American community had a really strong focus in the '60s. We knew what we were doing and, as a community, we had gathering places, churches, and opportunities to communicate in those venues. It was a very strong movement for that reason.

Until recently, that focus was diminished. However, now Black Lives Matter has again brought focus to the effort. I believe that, in the realm of state arts advocacy, we are facing a similar situation. We lack a common message, a common vision, and a common goal.

Larry Meeker and I are going to agree to disagree on a couple of things about arts advocacy. He will talk about arts advocacy and its relationship to economic development. I am going to tell you that art can be for art's sake—and for humanity's sake. I believe we need to advocate for art as a way of giving people dignity. Yes, I know we can feed and house people, but if you take away the aesthetics of life or if we do not provide equal access to the aesthetics of life, then we limit people's ability to be human. To me, that is the critical role the arts play in our society. When we have a shared vision for the arts, I believe that vision should be rooted in a conversation about human dignity. I also think of the value of the arts in terms of placemaking, community building, and opportunities for the creative expression of our shared humanity.

I want to conclude these remarks with a little story. I have two children. They are 11-month-old twin boys. Being able to watch them develop side by side, I can see the intricacies of what they are interested in much more clearly than if I were seeing one child develop by itself. Now, I am biased, of course. When Baby B was in my belly, he surprised me one day by kicking, boom, boom, and it worried me a little bit. I was like, "What is going on inside of my stomach right now?" I knew it was him because he was in the Baby B position. I turned down the music I was listening to at the time, and the kicking stopped. I turned the music back up, and boom, boom, boom. I realized he was kicking in my belly to the rhythm of the music! He is now 11 months old and, still, when I am in the kitchen making rhythmic sounds, he loves them. He gets so excited—these sounds light up his face. At the age of six months, I took him to an opera. He just sat there enthralled the entire time. Art, right? It's in the blood and is a natural part of all of us. In the case of my child, he was an artist even before he was born.

**Larry Meeker:** I don't know that we are on a different page. I think we have different approaches. One of the things that struck me is that, during this century, two cave-related discoveries were made. One was on the coast of Spain, and another was in Germany. In one cave, there were cave drawings, and in the other there were flutes made out of mammoth ivory and bird bone. What was interesting about these caves is that they are older than anything we have discovered related to the arts. Forty-two thousand years old—ten thousand years older than the Chevaux cave paintings in France.

All this makes me wonder. This was the time of the Neanderthals, pre-homosapiens. Were these merely idle things for the rich to do? Were there statuses such as being rich and a separation into classes at that point? Or were these art forms found in the caves a fundamental means of communication that linked us in language in a way that resulted not only in the development of individuals but in the creation and nurturing of communities? I prefer to think the latter. I very much believe the arts are integral to our human experience.

That said, I want to move on to a different track. Wilbur Mills, a former (colorful) speaker of the US House of Representatives, is often noted for the brief quip, "All politics is local." For me, that raises a corollary question with the arts: Is all art local? If not, how do we make a case beyond the local community for doing something for the arts through government or through advocacy?

In Kansas, when Governor Brownback axed the Kansas Arts Commission, he fired its staff and defunded the organization. In its place, his allies created something called the *Kansas Arts Foundation*, a nonprofit organization designed to stimulate voluntary contributions to the arts. The vision was that the Foundation would collect these contributed funds and then fund the arts in a manner similar to what the Kansas Arts Commission had done. I think, by any measure, it was a failure.

I do not think that failure suggests that the arts are not important. I believe one could engage in a similar experiment with business development. I suspect if you created a nonprofit organization to accept voluntary contributions to, for example, support the movement of corporations and businesses to the state of Kansas, I doubt there would be many contributions to that, either. So that prompts the question: How do we make a public case for contributions to anything or advocate for anything?

Clearly, norms in today's world are changing. If you don't believe that, you didn't see the first presidential debate. I think we have new opportunities, particularly today in this symposium, to think about new approaches to supporting the arts. I believe the symposium's keynote speaker made an important comment. He said he believed that one clear avenue to the ears of legislators was through economic development. I would suggest there may be something even more fundamental than simply the language of economic development. How many here, either you personally or your children or grandchildren, have chosen a place to live before ever looking for a job in that area? That is not something that would have happened in the 20th century. At that time, people chose work first; they chased the job. After they landed the job, they went where the corporation asked them to go.

The reason for that is twofold. One is that today's technology allows more people to work remotely. The other is that today's corporations are more heavily grounded in intellectual capital as opposed to the physical capital of land, machinery, and equipment like they were in the 20th century. Twenty-first-century companies can move very quickly and very easily. As a result, businesses are beginning to follow the people, as opposed to the 20th-century people following the job. In addition, rooted in this changing nature of work is an important arts question: What role do the arts play in the 21st century in attracting not just businesses but people and communities so that those communities can thrive? I believe that if you go back to those early cave paintings, now some 42,000 years old, there may be some answers to that. I think the arts are integral to how we form and build community. And I think that probably is going to be the case moving forward.

# Report on the Results of a National Survey of State Arts Advocacy Organizations

Anthony Radich, Executive Director, WESTAF

**Anthony Radich:** The primary structure for state arts advocacy is the state arts advocacy organization. Its development was largely stimulated by the creation of state arts agencies approximately 50 years ago. After all these years of operation, we thought a survey of this group would be useful. We asked Barry Hessenius to conduct a survey of these organizations by telephone. Hessenius' work was then expanded by the WESTAF staff. The results of the survey are in draft form. We plan to send out the information collected to each of the advocacy organizations surveyed to ensure that what we have on record is as accurate and up to date as possible. As a result, this report on the findings is a draft report based on preliminary results. Although some minor adjustments may be made to the findings, the initial findings raise questions about where traditional advocacy organizations are headed.

One surprising finding was that half of all arts advocacy organizations of record could not be reached with a first or second call. Often, the contact for the organization could only be located if the organization's website listed its board members and these individuals were tracked down. In several instances, a part-time paid administrator had either recently departed with no replacement or a new part-time administrator had been hired, but contact information was not yet updated on the organization's website. In still more cases, the organization was dormant. We know that state arts advocacy is often an under resourced field, but the level of inactivity we encountered is concerning.

Another finding was that, among state arts advocacy organizations, what I call *ghost ship websites* are abundant. These are the websites of dead, dormant, or active—but minimally active—organizations. For example, there were websites with content that was last updated in years like 2008. Current information is a pretty important issue in the field of advocacy. At this point, I want to note that I am not being critical of the advocacy organizations. These organizations are operated by dedicated and hard-working people with often very limited resources. But I would like to note that, after about 50 years, we as a field should be able to do better.

Another finding was that 25 states currently have no operating statewide arts advocacy organization. Some of those states had arts education-focused advocacy organizations; however, we have found that such entities seldom engage in general state-level arts advocacy, which is the focus of this survey.

If staff makes a difference in the success of arts advocacy organizations, I think we have a problem. The research found that 24% of all state arts advocacy organizations had at least one full-time employee. Twenty-four percent had part-time paid employees, and 52% of these organizations were operated entirely by volunteers. State arts advocacy organizations are largely volunteer-driven entities.

I would observe that staffed advocacy organizations have greater success. There are some anomalies out there, but I think we need to look at how to staff these organizations if we are serious about progress.

Another finding is that the size of a state arts advocacy organization's budget appears to matter. In this area, there are haves and have-nots. Four state advocacy organizations have budgets of \$500,000 or more. I would observe that if an organization has a budget of approximately \$100,000, it can operate what I would consider a full-time and serviced operation—even if the administrator is paid on a part-time basis. When budgets are under \$100,000, being highly effective is just much more difficult. Yes, there are outliers but not very many. We have not looked at the possible correlation between advocacy organizations' budget sizes and the sizes of the budgets of state arts agencies, but I imagine there is some relationship.

What other questions should we pose and investigate in order to understand how to create and manage successful state arts advocacy organizations? One is that we need to ask a variety of questions in order to understand why some advocacy groups succeed while others fail. We also need to delve into the quality of the relationships between state arts agencies and the advocacy groups. In our survey, most respondents reported that they had good inter-organizational relationships. However, that finding does not square with the broader and persistent conversation in the field. That conversation is one of distrust, competition, and dysfunction in many—but not all—states. In this area of concern, I do not believe fault can be placed on any single actor. Rather, there appear to be limitations in the structure of the relationships that have been built between the advocacy groups and the state arts agencies. We need to look at those relationships and consider ways to improve them. Of course, we also need to understand how successful inter-organizational relationships are structured and acted out.

At WESTAF, our next step in considering ways to bolster state-level arts advocacy is to look at the results of the study, further verify the data, and then ask some deeper questions. We do not currently have a plan to guide us to new work in this area. WESTAF currently supports lobbyists in all 13 of its participating states. We want to continue funding lobbyists because we know that approach has been successful. However, the Hessenius survey presents a note of caution regarding the degree to which WESTAF might invest in building up state arts advocacy entities. Maybe throwing money into the traditional state arts advocacy organization is a waste; perhaps we should seek out and/or develop a plan B. I do not think we fully know what works and what does not work in that area at this time. We need to talk to a lot more people, but this survey has been a good start for us.

**Larry Meeker:** If you had administered this survey 10 or 20 years ago, do you think you would have seen different results? I ask that because Kansas is currently one of the 25 states without a functioning state arts advocacy organization. If you had taken this survey after the governor axed the Kansas Arts Commission, there was a very lively state arts advocacy group. But the group is on again, off again.



**Anthony Radich:** I think that is something we need to look at. There may not have been any more active arts advocacy groups than we have today, but my recollection is that, as a cohort, they were a more robust group than what exists today. Some of this loss, I would suggest, is due to the condition of state arts agencies in recent years, in which there is sometimes not enough of a vision to attract and then feed advocacy. Why should they come back year after year just to keep an arts agency alive?

**Sue Gens:** If you could ask advocacy organizations about the demographics of their members, I worry that many arts advocacy organizations tend to look like this table [older and white]. I wonder what that means for the future.

**Anthony Radich:** You raise a very real and a very serious concern.

**Janet Brown:** Years ago, there were probably 15 robust arts advocacy organizations—but there were a lot of service organizations that were also advocacy organizations. At that time they could get more money and staff for this work. I think what we are seeing is the rise of some and then the demise of others.

**Larry Meeker:** I would be curious to know whether the organizations that remain active are politically reactive or proactive. I think being reactive requires one level of resources. When an arts advocacy organization is proactive, its larger agenda requires more financial and personnel resources.

**Virginia Gowski:** I think you could probably do this survey every year, and the results would be different. Maybe there would be consistency in numbers, but the individual states would change. In my 15 years of advocacy work, I have observed a major inconsistency in the existence and functioning of arts advocacy organizations. I find that their success—and even very existence—is often based on either the quality of volunteers or the time they have to actually advocate. But the level of activity also depends on what the issue of the day is and how major the danger posed to the arts agency is. When the arts agency is in danger of being eliminated, volunteerism goes way up, right? But then it is rescued, everybody's okay, everybody goes back to their day jobs. I think that roller-coaster nature of threat and opportunity has a great deal to do with having consistent funding or not, and that funding has a major impact on the degree to which an arts advocacy organization is stable and active.

**Larry Meeker:** Thank you. I think this survey will be helpful going forward and provide us with a better sense of what is actually happening on the state arts advocacy circuit.

Any good symposium that explores an issue in depth has to begin with a session on the landscape: What is there and what is happening? That is exactly what the next segment of this symposium is about. We will next hear a presentation on the status of state-level arts advocacy, comments on the strengths and weaknesses of state-level arts advocacy, rationales for how the field has emerged, and observations about how it is taking shape.

# The Status of State-Level Arts Advocacy

## Presenters:

- Matthew Wilson, Executive Director, MASSCreative
- Pam Breaux, Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
- Richard Stein, President, California Arts Advocates
- Brad Erickson, Past President, California Arts Advocates

## Respondents:

- Virginia Gowski, Chair, WESTAF
- Anthony Radich, Executive Director, WESTAF

**Matthew Wilson:** I want to start by talking about how I came to this community and to this movement. After listening to the self-introductions at the symposium's opening dinner session, I am reminded that I have taken a different path [as compared to others here] to get to where I am today.

I did not come to this work as an arts advocate with a background in the arts community. My work over the past 30 years has been in the field of community organizing and campaign directing for different movements.

For 25 years, I worked in the environmental community as an organizer with neighborhoods that were faced with environmental threats. I am talking about folks who had lost their drinking water supply and parents whose kids had asthma because of air pollution. I spent most of my time at people's kitchen tables bringing communities together to figure out how to fight polluters and how to get the government to do the work to protect its neighborhoods.

From there, I worked at the national level. I was at MoveOn.org for three years, from 2004-2007, working to build a broader movement to fight against the Iraq war. I worked to bring together the passions of folks who wanted to fight against what they felt was an unjust war. My career has been focused on working with folks who are passionate, have a real focus, and have a clear vision of how the country should be, but lack the political power to get there.

After I had wrapped up a failed campaign for a candidate for the US Senate from Massachusetts in 2012, someone passed me a job announcement for the position to be the first director of MASSCreative, a new arts advocacy organization in Massachusetts. I looked at it and said, "Why would I ever do that? I don't know anything about the arts and cultural community." Yet, looking deeper into it, I saw a real opportunity for me and for the community. I saw a community that has incredible passion, potential for social change, and incredible depth and breadth to it. In Massachusetts, however, the community did not have a strong unified political voice. That community tended not to engage in the political process, and did not quite know how to do it effectively—and certainly did not act as a united community.

In 2012, I was fortunate to be hired as the first MASSCreative director and entered into a pretty sweet situation. At 51 years old, I was able to come in and start an organization from scratch, which was an exciting opportunity. Plus, there were a couple of foundations, such as the Boston Foundation, that put seed money into the organization for a three-year period. We were set up well. In addition, I had the full support of the state arts agency, the Massachusetts Cultural Council. I also had the broad support of the arts and cultural leadership in Massachusetts. So we had this great base to start with. We had money, we had support from the arts community, and we had support from the community's leadership. With a charge and rough outline of a program, I set out to build a group that could effectively advocate for the arts and cultural community.

The first thing I did was to look for models of how to get this work done. Who should I be copying to start this new organization? I had come from the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) movement. They have this incredible model that is based on a state-by-state effort. That model lays out what you need to do, whether you are in California or Illinois or Florida, to build an advocacy group. I was looking through that and also researching the arts community, where I found that such a state-by-state model did not really exist. I talked to folks at Americans for the Arts (AFTA) who said, "Here are the folks to talk to," and I talked to folks in Illinois, Maryland, California, and Minnesota. They each provided ideas on what to do but no clear tried-and-trusted model to replicate.

I found that the key model that was being recommended to me was what I would call a *chamber of commerce model*. Applied to the arts, the model is one in which the group would be organized into an entity that would then serve as a representative of the arts community and its interests. I considered that model, but I thought it was limiting in terms of what we should be working on. I went back to my past and looked at movements. I looked at the environmental movement that I was part of; the anti-war movement; the peace movement; and the healthcare movement, which I had also worked in. I realized that what I wanted to focus on was building an organization that focuses on the broader movement for the core values of creativity that drive the arts and culture sector.

Our organization has two key parts. One is devoted to creating a public interest narrative around what we are doing. It is clear in our mission that we do that. Our mission at MASSCreative is to build a vibrant, healthy, and equitable Massachusetts by advocating for the resources and support the arts and cultural community need in order to thrive. It is not to build a strong arts and cultural community—it is to build a vibrant, healthy, and equitable Massachusetts, which makes it a place where people want to live, work, and raise their kids.

The second part of our organization centers on the need to build our political power. There had been some advocacy work in Massachusetts, but it was mostly what I would call *grasstops* advocacy work. That work was centered on advocacy work emanating from the leaders of the arts community. In many cases, this approach is successful. These are articulate, strong, and well-connected folks. Yet, that type of advocacy was not sufficient for us because it did not have the depth of support necessary to build the power we needed for change.

In addition to having a public interest narrative, we needed to engage in grassroots organizing. We needed to engage ordinary folks who have a passion for arts and culture and the creative community. We modeled this after what a number of environmental groups, such as the [Sierra Club](#), had done. The Sierra Club has great leadership, but its real strength comes from its grassroots membership. The Club has over 2 ½ million members. These people have a passion for clean air, clean water, and open space. Of course, when they vote for president or for members of the State House, they consider their special interests in the calculus they do in deciding who to vote for. Following this model, we developed MASSCreative. We are currently in our fifth year of operation, and we sponsor a three-pronged program that works to educate the public, advocates for the needs of the community, and organizes Massachusetts to build power for the benefit of the arts and cultural community.

There are several principles that have guided us in our work. If you consider the principles to be elements of a model, I am not certain it reflects the model I was searching for five years ago. However, the principles are perhaps components of an emerging model. I believe we need to consider models of ways to organize ourselves. I also think it is important for us, as a community of interest, to start thinking that there is more than one model we should consider—that there is more than one way to organize ourselves.

Certainly one model is the *chamber model*, which works effectively in Minnesota. There, the model has resulted in incredible outcomes. The chamber model can work, and it should always be considered as one of several options. However, I think others should consider the *movement model*. The movement model is another approach that can also be very successful, provided we are willing to put rigor into developing its structures. The movement model focuses on the importance of developing infrastructures and resources that are important to the development of long-term success.

Here are the key principles that I believe are important for the successful implementation of a movement-style model:

- You have to start with what I call the *triad of support*. You need money. We are fortunate in Massachusetts, where we have foundations that gave us seed money and continue to invest in us. The initial investor was the Boston Foundation, which is the largest community foundation in Massachusetts and, I believe, the second largest in the country. The Barr Foundation followed and has been a very generous supporter. They have given us the resources we need to be able to hire staff. Right now, MASSCreative has five staffers, giving us the capacity to do our work. You first need money and the investment of funders. You also need an effective partnership with the state arts agency. It is imperative that you work hand-in-hand with the arts agency. You do not have to be totally in sync with the agency in terms of your strategies, but you need strong alignment on mission and goals. Finally, you need to build the broad support of the arts and cultural community. These three areas of support are what you need as a base to start.

- You need to create an effective narrative. I get concerned when the focus of advocacy is just on obtaining more money for the arts. That approach comes off as the special interest ask, which is, “Give it to us, give it to us,” and, “It is all about us.” You need to broaden that narrative to justify being the recipient of public money from the city or state. Because we are a public good, we are something that benefits the economy, enriches our education system, and builds livable communities. We have to tell that broader narrative. The work that is currently being done around public will is important to the enrichment and expansion of our narrative. Our key narrative was developed after reading [The Arts Ripple Effect](#), which was issued in 2010. It was prepared by the Topos Partnership for the Cincinnati Fine Arts Fund. The report provides great ways to talk about the arts as integral to the broader society, not just a great stand-alone thing.
- We can’t be shy about power and politics because they are the venue we play in. I find that politicians do things for two reasons. One is because they think something is a good idea. The other reason is because they think that something is a good idea in political terms. They need to know that the public is behind them and that, if they vote to support arts/culture-related items, they are going to get re-elected. We need to build power; we can’t shy away from it.
- We have to run focused issue-advocacy campaigns. We first need goals and a vision from which we can develop pieces of legislation. Then we can provide opportunities for people to engage. When I first took this job, people said, “It is going to be impossible to organize arts supporters or artists because they are all over the place.” That is not the case. People are eager to engage and to tell their stories, they just don’t know when to do it or how to do it. That is why Sofia Klitzker and the work she is doing in Los Angeles is so great. She is giving local folks training on how to tell their story and when to tell their story and providing them with opportunities to tell the story. That is what we try to do. We give them opportunities to tell their stories and engage because they really want to. The symphony of voices that we bring together helps us build our power.
- Also, I believe it is important to use elections. Elections are a time in our country when we talk about priorities, challenges, and the vision of our community. Over the past years, arts and culture have not been showing up at those discussions. As a result, candidates do not talk about arts and culture and, because of that, we are often left out. We must engage in elections in a non-partisan way. We started to do that in Massachusetts, and it has made a big difference with new folks getting elected and having arts and culture as part of their agendas.
- Finally, but importantly, we need to hire political people and organizers to lead advocacy efforts. We have to understand that an arts advocacy staff with a political orientation is very important.

We have had many successes in Massachusetts. We are now entering our fifth year, and we are making change. We have impacted public education.

Newspapers are writing more about us. *The Boston Globe* is editorializing in favor of the arts community. And there is more talk in the community about the importance of arts and culture in our society. In addition, our advocacy is starting to prompt incremental change. Over the past four years, the state has increased its investment in the arts community by 50%. That is still not enough, but we are making gains.

As far as building power, our organization now has 400 members from the arts community and beyond. These members have invested in our work, and we have over 27,000 people in Massachusetts who have actually taken political action in support of the arts and cultural community. We are starting to build that political strength with a message imbedded in an advocacy platform that can make a difference.

**Pam Breaux:** I very much want to get to the “what next?” part of this conversation. However, my role at this moment is the “what now?” part of the conversation. I am pleased to share some thoughts with you from the vantage point of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) about what is happening in advocacy now for our organization and for its members.

To begin, I would like to provide you with some brief background information. In 1996, aggregate state legislative appropriations to state arts agencies’ budgets totaled approximately \$280 million. There was then some growth in appropriations between 1996 and 2001. We saw a peak in 2001 for state arts agency budgets, and we peaked at almost \$450 million. However, since that peak, the declines ensued. The recession is one reason for that, but during the years following the recession, although there was much unevenness, the budgets suffered an overall decline. That is no surprise, I am sure, to anyone in the room.

In 2012, budgets were down to about \$260 million. We began to see a little bit of growth again in 2013. In 2015, budgets began to ratchet up, and we saw gains where budgets reached over \$400 million. That is still \$100 million below the 2001 peak. However, we are now trending upward, and that is good.

Interestingly, as state arts agency budgets declined, that decline coincided with something occurring that was related to the relationship of people to government. During that period, public confidence in government declined, especially confidence in federal government. That public attitude has had ramifications at the state government level as well. There, we see serious declines not just in state arts agency dollars but also in state support for other kinds of state activities. We have not had significant public confidence in government for a very long time—not since John F. Kennedy was president. Literally. Not long after Lyndon Johnson’s tenure, we began seeing marked declines in the public’s confidence in government, and those declines have been particularly steady and strong during the last 10 years.

Through all of this, state arts advocates have followed a fairly traditional model for advocating for state arts agency budgets and other policy measures. Under that approach, advocates marshalled resources and made the case.

We have experienced some successes and some failures. We have also observed quite a variety of advocacy organization structures. Over the course of time, advocates have made the case by articulating the value of the arts as a legitimate place for state investments among many competing policy areas. Slowly but surely, we are getting increasingly sophisticated about how we do that; how we talk about the arts in relation to the economy, to workforce, to justice, to prisons, and to healthcare.

I would say that 20+ years ago, as we began to mature in making arguments along those lines, we largely talked about the arts as related to those other policy areas. But it was difficult for us to demonstrate what caused what. What was it about the arts that caused these great things to happen in healthcare and other areas? I would say, as we mature, we are not just showing the relationship between the arts and these other policy areas, we are doing a better job of demonstrating the causal side. But we still have a long way to go.

At NASAA, when we look at advocacy efforts from the national perspective, we have found that the most successful advocacy efforts across the country tend to embody four strategies. I want to remind you that I am talking about advocacy *today*. The four strategies that tend to lift up the most successful advocacy case-making are:

- A tailored case for government investment in the arts
- A well-mobilized, popular support effort
- Champions in positions of power and influence
- Programs that embody public value

When you hear those four points and think about it, it all makes sense. That is how we are working now, right? Let me unpack these. I want to start by using a state example: South Carolina. That state's arts agency has been through some massive challenges in the past few years, particularly related to its current governor. For example, it went through three years of vetoes of their budget—a threat to its existence three years in a row. It is now past that, I am happy to report. Each of those years, the legislature came in and overrode the veto (2012, 2013, and 2014). Finally, in 2015 and 2016, we are seeing that the governor appears to have given up on vetoing the agency's budget.

For South Carolina, the equity argument around urban versus rural was central to its advocacy strategy. The argument of the haves and the have-nots in urban and rural areas of the state resonated for South Carolina. In addition, the contribution of the arts to education resonated with legislators in South Carolina. Also, advocates made great use of public opinion polls, and those public opinion polls overwhelmingly put the legislature on notice that 70% of the residents of the state were in favor of government support of the arts. Now the advocates in South Carolina could have made any one of a hundred arguments that were pro-arts arguments. But those were the ones that resonated for their place and time. Those arguments were tailored to the moment at hand and were embedded in a strategy to mobilize popular support with considerable traditional media and social media attention.

In terms of champions of influence and power, the South Carolina effort was not about folks who work for arts organizations making the case. Rather, it was mayors, business leaders, and key legislators making the case—these influential champions were non-arts folks. That layer of support was critical.

The South Carolina effort also focused on programs that embodied public value. They did this because what the public really cares about tends to be what legislators also care about. For South Carolina, what resonated in that advocacy environment was the Cultural Districts program. In that program, there is a direct link between mayors as champions and Cultural Districts improving communities. In folk arts, one can make the link between the urban and rural art forms that citizens care about. Also, the value of arts to education was another critical argument. All of these efforts were crafted from an awareness of what was going on and what was valued so that they would resonate with the public.

Now I would like to speak to some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current traditional advocacy model. In terms of strengths, I think we are continuously better able to articulate why the arts matter. That has been a journey. I do not think there is a specific destination we have reached, and that journey needs to continue. We need to expand and refine the articulation of ways the arts are related to society, to education, to economy, and to other areas of public life.

One strength that is sometimes left untapped where advocacy is concerned is the strength of creativity. Creativity is on our side. When words fail, art expresses. Creativity is our strength. It is important not to forget that. We also need to not lose sight of the fact that stories and emotions—as neuroscience demonstrates—should still be a part of advocacy work and our field has inherent strength in those areas.

Over the course of time, we in the arts have developed new partnerships related to policy areas to which we have sought to connect. Again, this is a strength that perhaps is less than fully tapped where advocacy is concerned. We need to ask ourselves if we are effectively deploying those new partners as advocates. In some cases, we are. In many cases, we are not. But again, partnerships are a source of strength that needs to be brought to bear.

In terms of weaknesses, what I would say about our traditional model for advocacy is that sometimes it works, and sometimes it does not. We really need to do a better job of unpacking why.

Our model is largely responsive, and I think that gets at something Larry Meeker noted. We respond to the current political environment. That is important, and you have to do that. But I think that by doing so, it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture because you are making all of your work about that—about responding. In doing so to the exclusion of a larger vision, you are not carving out the space for that future-thinking piece, that proactive piece, that long-term piece, that eye-on-the-prize that is the game-changing piece. It is so easy to get lost in responding to the muck that is today. But I think there always has to be space to do both. It is not one or the other, but both.



Keeping advocates inspired and engaged is critical to the success of advocacy. When an agency is under threat and advocates are asked to respond to the current political environment, that can be motivating. However, I think it is really difficult to keep advocates inspired, active, and engaged. Reactive advocacy may activate advocates, but there is not much that is inspirational or long-term about this approach.

Also, I do not believe we have positioned ourselves to get ahead of the political game. We do not own it, we respond to it. I don't want to get all *Scandal* and *House of Cards* on us, but there are folks who own it. And we are not among those at the moment. Getting ahead of it—politics and political will—is really important, and we need to figure out how to do that. I do not think the arts community can figure that out in isolation.

There is a lot of work to be done related to solidarity between state arts agencies and their advocates, as Anthony Radich mentioned earlier. I just want to affirm that. There is good work and there are good, solid relationships and not-so-good relationships. But important work needs to be done there if we want to get into a world of game-changing advocacy.

Our effectiveness as advocates is uneven across the country. We have places like Minnesota, where we experienced a quantum leap. We have incremental great leaps like in California, especially with the recent prison-arts program. We have serious challenges in Kansas—frankly, in more states than Kansas. Each state is different and unique but, at the same time, they are interconnected. For instance, the kind of thinking behind the three vetoes in South Carolina does not happen only in isolation. We certainly don't want the veto example to inspire similar actions in other states. There is an interconnectedness across the states and, for that reason, it is equally important to keep in mind the quantum leaps versus the incremental leaps versus the “fight-for-your-life” moments because they influence considerations and actions beyond state borders.

I wonder if our advocacy networks look like the advocacy networks of other industries. Perhaps we can learn from other industries' advocacy networks that look really different from arts advocacy networks. Why are they different? In what ways are they different? Which ones are successful and why? I imagine we will find that the difference is not just professional versus volunteer. Perhaps we can learn some things from other industries that will energize and improve our efforts on behalf of the arts in the future.

I can hardly wait for the “what next?” in our conversation, but these comments offer a perspective of what is today.

**Richard Stein:** I feel very much that I am an amateur arts advocate, and that has its pluses and minuses. I think that, in many respects, it is passion that has been driving our process. And it is not just me but also my predecessors, including Brad Erickson and others who founded California Arts Advocates 20 years ago. In fact, we just honored our founders at a Confluence conference a week ago in Sacramento.

Those founders started the organization we have today and built it on the grave of an earlier advocacy organization. There has been a long history of arts advocacy in our state, with some success and some failure along the way.

I was struck when I read the symposium's advance reading materials. In them, I recognized John Urice's name because I remember him from back in the '80s and the kind of research he was doing at the time, and also Anthony Radich's paper that he wrote in 2007 for WESTAF. These papers addressed the relevance of state arts agencies, and I would say the tenor was doom and gloom. I do not know if you read those papers, but they really almost predicted the end of the state arts agency movement. They reminded me that one of the issues was that there was a shift to money for the arts coming from cities and tourist dollars, and that is why state arts funding was likely to be on the decline.

But *relevance* was the relevant word. For those of us who grew up in the '60s, *relevance* was a big word back then, and it has come back into vogue and is a very important word. Nina Simon, the director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, was a keynote speaker at our recent Confluence conference. She just completed a book called [The Art of Relevance](#), and it is really about how she has totally reinvented how to run an art museum.

Relevance was something that was not only on the minds of people concerned about the health of the state arts agencies. When the California Arts Council experienced its huge cut in funding in 2003, there was only one funder in the state who stepped forward to say, "We have a disaster here on our hands." That was the largest foundation in California, the James Irvine Foundation. They stepped forward and they invested a lot of money in the arts. They had always been somewhat of an arts funder, but this time they really invested in it—and they invested in a lot of research that focused on the fact that most arts organizations were not relevant in the way that they needed to be in the 21st century.

It was not just a matter of losing the state arts funding. The Council was losing public support, it was losing private support; it was the fact that—in California in particular—the demographics were changing dramatically. There were huge swaths of the population that were totally not served by the mainstream arts organizations, and something had to be done. A lot of the institutions that received funding from the James Irvine Foundation were dragged kicking and screaming to a point of understanding why this was a problem. Those institutions received a half-million-dollar grant to do something about it, but they really did not believe in it. Many of them did eventually become believers, and some great work was ultimately accomplished.

One outcome of this cycle of events was that the availability of funding from the James Irvine Foundation and the loss of state arts agency funding resulted in the field mainly looking elsewhere for money. There was not really a belief that the funding could come back at the state level. This position was exacerbated by the state fiscal crisis. Also, at the time, California had a state arts council director who was a very nice lady, but she was at the very end of her public service career and she was a caretaker who just waited out the few years before her retirement. As the governor's appointee, she absolutely would not cross or even get near the line of

advocacy. However, we did have an Arts Council chair, Malissa Shriver, who was appointed by the governor. But she was caught between a rock and a hard place. Her brother-in-law, Republican Governor Schwarzenegger, had appointed her. The legislature was led by Democrats; she was a Democrat; and her husband was a Democrat, Bobby Shriver, who had political ambitions. It was very difficult for her to advocate for an increase in the Arts Council's budget. Believe me, she worked very hard to do that. But one of the best things that she was able to get across was the professionalization of the Arts Council. She was able to change the authority to hire a Council director from a governor's appointment to a hiring by the Council. As a result, a professional was hired from the field, and the Council members themselves oversaw the search and made the appointment. That is the process that led to the hiring of Craig Watson. You cannot underestimate the sea change that this caused in terms of the culture of our state arts agency, our Council, and the advocacy efforts in our state.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, a number of new Arts Council members were appointed. For the first time in a very long time, many of the appointees had strong political connections. One appointee, Wiley Aitken, had chaired the Democratic party in Orange County back in the day when he seemed to be the only Democrat there. He has since been a kind of rainmaker for Democratic candidates statewide, and he is the person largely responsible for the election of Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, knocking out Bob Dornan 20-some years ago. Wiley knew the governor, and he knew all the key legislative leaders personally.

Another appointee was Roz Wyman. She was the first woman elected to the City Council in Los Angeles and helped bring the Dodgers to LA in the '50s. Roz is an octogenarian who is irascible and can be difficult to work with, but she had a long and deep history with Jerry Brown. She tells the story of our governor sitting on her lap when he was a child. There was no question that Roz Wyman had a strong and continuing bond with Brown.

Those two individuals, in collaboration with newly hired California Arts Council Director Craig Watson, had the attitude, "We don't care if we step over the line because it's better than just steering a moribund, non-funded, non-entity of a state arts council. We either have to do something and risk getting fired by the governor or by the legislative leadership who appointed us, or it's better to just go away."

That attitude changed the thinking of our arts advocacy group there and then. That group had been prodded by Anthony Radich of WESTAF to hire a new lobbyist because, at the time, our long-time lobbyist was a part-time lobbyist who also worked as a nurse in a hospital, and one of her main clients was the National Rifle Association. In a super majority Democratic legislature, she was not that welcome in many legislative offices. We also did not have the money to pay her adequately, and she was, in fact, working pro bono for a time. Anthony came to us and said WESTAF had funds to invest in a lobbyist, but in order to draw down the funds, the advocates

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<sup>1</sup> *In June 2017, Democratic Governor Jerry Brown worked with the Legislature to restore the governor's authority to appoint the California Arts Council director .*

needed to change who they hired to advocate in the legislature. Brad Erickson then went out in search of a new lobbyist. Every door closed on us. They were not interested. The arts were a losing proposition. They would say, "Oh, no, we have too many clients as it is. We're not interested."

We were at wits' end. I had a good relationship with the Boeing company, which is one of our major funders at Arts Orange County. Boeing's California headquarters is located in Orange County and their charitable-giving people are all in the government relations department. I got to know some of the government relations people as well. I said, "Do you know of anyone up there in Sacramento who can help us?" and they said, "Yeah, our lobbyist." They introduced us to Shaw/Yoder/Antwih, which is one of the larger lobbying firms there. They represent many cities and Boeing, obviously. They took us on as a client.

The benefit of that arrangement cannot be overstated. All of a sudden, we had a lobbyist who knew the landscape, who was always gathering intelligence about everything happening at the capitol, and who was in the capitol every single day. And if they didn't want to see him because he was with Boeing, he now had the arts to wave around and say, "See? I'm a good guy. Everybody loves the arts."

The lobbyist basically said, "Your strategy has been all wrong." We had been finding a champion who would introduce a budget bill; it would die in appropriations; and our champion would say, "Oh, that's too bad." Anything we did to support the bill was always, "Oh, we have got to get all the letters out, all these emails out," always going into the grassroots campaign-mode. And the lobbyist said, "That is not how it's done. That is not how sausage is made in Sacramento. You need to have a direct relationship with the key leaders, you need to know who knows whom, and you need to be talking to them because they are going to put the numbers in the budget. It is not going to come through a bill; it is going to be a part of the overall budget. You are going to show up to a few hearings." And we have done that.

Basically, you still need your champions and we did have our champions. We did need new talking points because, like Pam Breau said, it really was one of those things where the old art-for-art's-sake argument was not resonating. The state was just finally clawing its way back from fiscal disaster, and we had to demonstrate exactly what we were doing for the public good. The first bit we got was a \$2 million discretionary gift from Speaker Perez, who was on his way out. It was set aside for us after the budget had been approved, and somehow he had a place from which to pull \$2 million. After he did, he said, "Show me what you can do with it."

The governor had informed us that he was absolutely not going to take the lead on an increase. However, he suggested that, if we persuaded the legislature to provide a modest increase, he was not going to stand in the way. After all, he founded the Arts Council in his first term as governor in 1974.

Human-resource capital was important to us as well. We started to expand the board of the advocacy organization and to establish wide geographic representation and a board that was more reflective of the demographics of California. Also, a few years earlier, we founded a sister organization, a 501(C)3 called *Californians for the Arts*. The organization was intended to be a mechanism for the advocacy organization to obtain some philanthropic funds because we had almost no money to do the work within.

There was a lot of thinking outside of the box, and we all embraced a team approach to the work. We have monthly board calls to which we invite the California Arts Council director and the Council's legislative liaison to participate. During the call, we all listen to reports from the lobbyists. There is always a negotiation of that line that represents the Council's interests and the advocacy organization's interests. Working as a team, we quickly found that there are things that we as advocates can do that the Council and its staff cannot do—and vice versa. When we would receive suggestions from Craig Watson and his staff or when we would give Craig and his staff suggestions, there was a lot of give and take. Is it a perfect relationship? No. In fact, at first, it was a little bit rocky. But over the past three years, the collaboration in a team framework has really developed into a fairly well-oiled machine. I think that is why we are where we are today.

The question now is the sustainability of our advocacy organization. We currently have a mix of resources. We are receiving some grant funding through Californians for the Arts via the 501(C)3 structure, and those funds are underwriting some infrastructure. At the present time, we have no staff. We recently hired our lobbying firm—which is also an association-management firm—to manage some administrative work, such as our finances and membership. We are concerned about branding, especially the ongoing confusion between our two organizations, Californians for the Arts and California Arts Advocates. We will be dealing with that later.

State arts advocacy work should not just be about increasing the budget for the state arts agency. Fortunately, and with a great deal of work, we have seen some significant successes there. But we also need to be engaged in efforts that support the health of the nonprofit sector. We needed to work to stop bad ideas from taking root. For example, ending things like the [nonprofit warning label bill](#), which was a legislator's bright idea. The bill was drafted to require charities operating or engaging in charitable solicitations in California to post their administrative overhead expenses or a link to such information on each and every one of their web pages and on the first page of each and every fundraising document. We were able to defeat that bill by collaborating with many non-arts partners.

We also are managing some things on a local level. In Los Angeles County, there is an initiative on the ballot to levy a parcel tax to fund increased arts education. The proposal is a pilot for us. We are serving as a sponsor of it and working with the organizing committee. That is an approach we may undertake more often.

In closing, I want to share a story. The way the California legislature works can be strange. One of our greatest advocates is Jim Nielsen, a Republican. He has been a state senator, and he has been a person who is very passionate about the arts. He always fights for increases in the Arts Council budget. But then he votes against the budget because all of the Republicans know that the Democratic super majority will pass the budget anyway. So, as a block, the Republicans always vote against the budget. So, Jim, God love him, nudges that number for the California Arts Council up, but in the end, he votes against the budget. But as a result of his work, we increased the Council's budget.

**Brad Erickson:** I want to open my remarks by thanking WESTAF for organizing this conversation about the state of state arts advocacy across the country. It is a topic that I have personally had a great deal of interest in for many years.

I have been involved in arts advocacy for a very long time. I started in this field by attending the Arts Advocacy Days that Americans for the Arts hosts annually in Washington, DC. Attending those meetings provided me with an initial understanding of the State Arts Advocacy Network (SAAN). Lisa Caretto was our California liaison to the group for several years. She would return from meetings and report to the board about what was happening in advocacy-active states around the country, such as Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan. It seemed an impossible dream that we might be able to get to some sort of state in which we could be as effective as some of the amazing advocacy-successful states we had heard about.

I then took Lisa's place as the California Arts Advocates liaison to the SAAN. The SAAN, for those of you who do not know, is hosted at Americans for the Arts, and we are fortunate to have had Lizzie Dorman and Jay Dick as staff there to support the network. Through SAAN, the advocacy organizations across the country host three national meetings throughout the year. One is at the Americans for the Arts annual convention in June. One is scheduled around the annual Advocacy Day, which occurs in the spring, and one is in the fall. I just passed the California liaison baton to Sofia Klatzker, who attended the fall meeting in Michigan a couple of weeks ago. But for eight years, I have attended those meetings. I have served on the SAAN executive committee for several years, served for two years as president and then as past president, which is a role I recently relinquished.

When I was attending those meetings, especially as I was coming out of our experience of seeing the funding for the California Arts Council's budget cut by 97%, I have to say that I went needing to learn; I went feeling a little ashamed. Here we were, the biggest state in the country and one that certainly has the arts at its core, and we were the laggard. We were 50th out of 50 states and even behind the territories in terms of per-capita funding for the arts. Clearly, this was our fault. I had to find what other states were doing to succeed when we had not. The concept of a successful state arts advocacy model and learning what made advocacy effective and what made for an effective advocacy organization were intensely important to me and, I believe also, intensely important to our board.

What I saw aligned with the WESTAF survey, which rings true with what we have been seeing around the SAAN for years. I remember Jay Dick saying several times that, in his view, SAAN was comprised of perhaps one third strong and effective organizations, another third that were hanging in and modestly effective, and then there was the third that were MIA. Maybe that one third has increased to a half since then as you reported it took many, many phone calls to contact them for the survey.

Only a very few state arts advocacy organizations have budgets of \$500,000 or more. When you look at a field where the big kahuna has a budget of half a million dollars, we are talking about an intensely under resourced field. Many state arts advocacy organizations have little or no money whatsoever. Many of them have budgets of less than \$50,000, which is the budget California Arts Advocates operated with for a long, long time. At times it was even less—like \$25,000. With this budget, we had to work within a state of 38 million people who wanted us to get something done.

When I scan all of the state arts advocacy organizations, note the ones that are effective, and identify the models that are working, I find only a handful of states that have the bigger-budget organizations. These are the states of Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. These organizations had very successful business plans, and it seemed possible to bring those plans and the models they work with to California and make it all work for us. Some of them were doubling as statewide service organizations, which is a great model of service and sustainability. In California, we talked about the possibility of becoming a statewide service organization and ways to use other sources of income and earned income to support our advocacy work.

We also looked at strong membership models, which are found in places like Ohio, Maryland, and elsewhere. But the membership model seemed to be predicated on strong funding from the state arts agency. Because California's funding had been reduced to very, very little, this did not seem to be a pathway to us developing a strong membership base, which appeared to be a very uphill battle. Imagine going to the field and asking them to pay a very high membership fee so that we can fight the very long and uphill battle to try to get you some more money. So that model did not seem to be particularly fitting for us.

As we looked around, there were not a whole lot of models that seemed to apply to our situation. I very much agree with Matt Wilson that we need an array of different models, including the one he is using in Massachusetts. In the different states, there are different funding opportunities, clearly. There are also different political environments. As Sofia Klatzker and I were talking about earlier this morning, there are different environments in which to build the other membership organizations, and the way membership is developed needs to recognize the differences.

In California, we have many arts-membership organizations. My day job is as the director of the service organization Theatre Bay Area. We are a membership service organization. Organizations pay us dues; it is part of how we generate the revenue needed to operate the organization. The same is true of Arts for LA. When the same is also true for California Arts Advocates, there is a problem. We are just in a crowded sector. Looking for ways to raise funds and be effective was a key reason I would go to SAAN meetings. I was always looking for a model that I could bring back to California that would work for us.

One thing I observed at the SAAN meetings was that highly effective leadership contributed greatly to an advocacy organization's success. I observed that the really strong states had extremely strong leaders. I also observed that many effective leaders had often been in their positions for years and years. Some of the organizations that seemed to be mammoth from the outside were actually centered on one really effective person who had been doing that work for decades. Strong leadership is very important.

Of course, the leader's ability to develop a network that can be activated to mobilize the field is also very important. I found that strong leaders had relationships with elected officials, with the legislature, with the governor, and they had strong relationships with their state arts agencies.

The advocacy organization-state arts agency relationship came up as a topic at the Americans for the Arts convention in Baltimore. I recall that Muriel Johnson, the California Arts Council's executive director at the time, was attending the meeting. After that, we began to invite the leadership of the Arts Council to our board meetings and to share back and forth what we were hearing. We wanted to replicate that model of building a strong personal relationship between the leadership of the advocacy organization and the leadership of the arts agency.

I think we have grown as organizations as we built this interorganizational relationship. I remember one year, Craig Watson had a more achievable goal that he sought in terms of appropriations, and the advocates had a wildly ambitious goal we were seeking. We were a little bit—but not really—at cross-purposes. Of course, everyone would have loved the ambitious aspirational goal, but we definitely did not have the same song sheet. The next year, we intentionally came together to say, "It sounds so much more harmonious if we are singing off of the same song sheet." So we actually got together to plan that out before we went public in any sort of way about the appropriations number that we were going for.

Some of the lessons that I learned from the SAAN were just invaluable. I think the most important thing that I would recommend for arts advocacy groups that are not one of those five-to-ten organizations that are well-funded and have a great leadership already in place, is that they take a good look at different models of organization and operation. They need to also understand that funding an advocacy effort is important to a point but, frankly, we are in a sector where \$100,000 can mean the difference in terms of making it an effective model or not. We are not talking about a fortune, although that can seem impossible if you only have \$5,000 in hand. Generous funding aside, a great deal can be done with really dedicated, energized, committed, and passionate volunteers, which we have had in California.



I believe we have been able to sustain our advocacy organization because of the volunteers whom we have attracted. I mean, our day jobs support us in this work. My board at Theatre Bay Area believes in advocacy. They send me to these meetings on their dime. When I attend advocacy meetings in California or out of state, I am going, and I am still working. I am not taking a vacation when I attend an AFTA Arts Advocacy Day or when I participate in a SAAN meeting. My organization is paying me to do that work. The same is true for Rick Stein, and the same is true for Sofia Klitzker, and the same is true, I think, for all of the volunteers we have who all come from the field. They are dedicated to this work, and they are able to do the work because their home organizations understand the value. The leadership of these organizations understand that, rather than engaging in advocacy on their own, they can have a better result when they unite with the state advocacy group to get the advocacy work done.

I think we are developing a model for an advocacy organization in California that is somewhat different from the way such groups are structured across the county. We reflect a way to operate in a state in which securing significant funds through membership is not currently feasible. We also do not have plans to become a service organization and generate earned income through that vehicle. We also do not have an incredibly strong staff leader who is willing to put in a great deal of time and not be paid much. We are developing a model that can be looked at by other groups around the country to say, "This is what you can do with a very little bit—and with some essential help from WESTAF if you are in the West." Our model is based on leveraging the modest resources we have, building partnerships, and securing great lobbyists. We use all of that to build relationships in the capitol and make progress in terms of appropriations and arts-policy development.

**Larry Meeker:** I would like make one comment. You said \$500,000 to fund an advocacy organization was not a tremendous amount of money. In Kansas, that is a great deal of money, even for the road budget. So we all have different stories that we live by.

**Virginia Gowski:** I like to hear the success stories, including the stories about advocacy organizations that have risen from the ashes. From these presentations, I took away five "haves:" 1) Have a leader with a vision; 2) Have a plan and, ideally, a plan developed in collaboration with your state arts agency; 3) Have a story; 4) Have a champion or three; and 5) Have the courage to go for something big.

I think that framework of "must haves" can be especially helpful to organizations that are just getting started or restarted. Matt Wilson also made an important point about how we staff these organizations. We tend to staff them with arts lovers—with people who work in the nonprofit field or who are recently retired from the nonprofit arts field. We do not staff them with community activists. We do not staff them with advocates with non-arts experience. Matt comes from the non-arts world, and he has had incredible success in Massachusetts. I think we need to understand the potential for success that reaching outside our comfort zone can bring us.

Brad Erickson made an important point when he described the member-services model as being in a very crowded field. This is the case in nearly every state, not just in California. And this situation is not limited to the arts crowd. It is also the case with general nonprofit associations and also industry associations.

We have heard about two core ways to conceptualize what we do in the area of state arts advocacy. One is that we are building a movement. The other is that we are representing our members. I suggest that you can represent your members by building a movement and perhaps by starting with a movement. You need to start there because if you start with a member-representation-organization model, you may never get to the build-a-movement part, or doing so will take a very long time. We are talking about the advocacy model versus the association model. WESTAF is, to some extent, an association. NASAA is an association. But neither of us is really building a movement.

Matt Wilson approached the task of building MASSCreative from the point of view of a movement first. That really resonated with me. I think when you talk in terms of a movement or an investment in a movement, you really inspire people. When you talk about networking and member services and “we are going to represent you and help push your line item request,” that is not very inspiring.

The last point I will make is about investment. Most of our state arts advocacy organizations are membership-based organizations, whether they are individuals, nonprofits, corporations, foundations, or others who support advocacy organizations—as was mentioned by Matt Wilson. I would like to encourage us to think about making investments in these organizations. Rather than framing financial support in terms of dues paying and membership, to think about it as an investment. In addition, rather than describing time donated to an organization as *volunteering*, we should consider describing it as *an investment of time*. There is more buy-in associated with thinking about it that way. The membership approach invites members to ask, “What can you do for me? I am your customer, I am your member.” Instead, how about a thought process that goes something like this, “You have invested in me, you have invested in my movement, and so let’s see where we can go together.” That seems to me to be a better partnership and far more inspirational.

**Anthony Radich:** This is a time when I hope all of us are open to considering different models of organization and also a time when I would hope we would accept the existence of a multiplicity of models for advocacy organizations. One of the major issues in our field, on both the advocacy side and the state arts agency side, has been a reluctance to embrace change and experimentation with new models. We also need to do a better job of accepting the failures that occasionally come with trying new models. In my opinion, throughout most of its history, the NASAA organization has exhibited great reluctance to accept new models of how state arts agencies might be organized and funded. This conservatism has, to a degree, bled over into the way state arts advocacy organizations are organized. But NASAA now has new leadership, and I am hopeful this will change. In fact, I think it really has to change in order for many of us to support initiatives of that organization.

State arts agencies, which tend to benefit most from the work of state arts advocacy organizations, could be more helpful to the advocacy effort. Sometimes, leadership in the state arts agency field think that their agency is something like an errant meteorite that has landed by accident on the planet of politics and state government. They find the situation problematic, and they really would rather be a private foundation that is free of government. This anti-government posture places them in a very disadvantaged position when it comes to advocacy. The agency leadership needs to realize that they were born within state government and that, in order to sustain and expand the agency's position within state government, one needs to engage in government and politics—not be repelled by them.

A manifestation of this posture is an all-too-familiar choice that I observe almost every day. Given the choice of applying the administrative time necessary to support one more dance performance in a state or scheduling a conversation with an ornery but powerful state legislator, the additional dance performance wins more times than not. In a number of states, this balance of choice needs to be reset. State arts agencies are organs of state government, and their governing boards and staff leaders need to proactively engage in the bureaucratic and political games of state government in order to succeed.

One factor related to the relative health of state arts advocacy organizations that has not yet been mentioned is the lack of involvement of large nonprofit arts organizations in them. With some exceptions, many states have completely lost the attention and active participation of large nonprofit arts organizations. I think we all know why. When the state arts agencies were initially established, all arts groups considered them a potential source of significant annual funding. But that vision of significant funds for large arts organizations has, again, with some exceptions, not been realized. Because the original bargain was large group advocacy for potential large funding return, the large groups decided they were no longer going to actively participate in state arts advocacy because it was not worth the time and resources they needed to expend. I think the non-participation of large arts organizations in state arts advocacy is an important issue that we need to discuss further. I think we need to talk about that during the next couple of days. We need these organizations. I understand that they can be difficult partners, even obnoxious. I know; I have worked with them before. But they can be strong allies; they have very deep roots in communities. They also have really good—and often underutilized—political connections. We need to consider ways to make use of them for state arts advocacy purposes and generally re-engage them. They are involved in this work in some states. However, in many more states, they are totally not in the picture.

## **Discussion**

**Kimberly Howard:** I want to share some thoughts on the conversation we have had up to this point. I am doing so in the form of words and phrases that will stimulate your thinking for the next segment of this symposium.

Political voice. Movements. Integral. Confidence in government is declining. Relatability. Causal. Public value. Who are our champions? Children. Game-changing. Own it. Who is on the ground? Who is our voice in the building? Where is the big money? Where are our super PACs for the arts? What is the business model that works? Agency and advocacy coalition. WESTAF investment.

Let's talk about legacy and leadership, which leads me to another thing I intuited: Where are the millennials in this conversation? They show up differently than the Gen X'ers and the baby boomers. Let's get them in the room—in leadership positions at the table.

**Larry Meeker:** As we begin the discussion, I want to raise one question. It's about what I *didn't* hear. I heard a lot about tactics. I heard a lot about funding—success if you get funding—and a lot about stories, connections, and how you go about making the case for the arts. But I really didn't hear anything about making the statewide case for the arts. If you think about what we do in our state arts agencies, we funnel the money back down to communities, but are we building—or do we need to build or want to build—a state image for the arts?

I raise that question because Governor Brownback axed the state arts agency in Kansas. Before he did that, I related a story to him—two stories. I said, “In 1967, I had the opportunity to go to Europe and spend a summer. I discovered that Kansas was known for more than wheat and Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*.” There were two things that Kansas was known for in the pre-Internet age. One was Jim Ryan, who had just broken the four-minute mile, and the other was the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, which was doing groundbreaking, world-class research on mental health.

Forty years later, in 2007, my wife and I checked into a hotel in Istanbul, Turkey, and filled out the registration form. When I wrote “Kansas, USA” on the bottom of the form, the hotel clerk looked at me and said in broken English, “No Evolution.” At that time, we were fighting teaching Creationism as science.

Each of our states has different profiles/images. California has an image that is different from other states in America. Florida has another image. Kansas—between Comedy Central and the news—has an image. One of the things I have not heard here: Is there a state image that we can or should promote with the arts? Or is our future simply lodged in garnering money, lobbying people, and funneling money back into communities?

We are at the part in the program where our focus is clearly on “what is.” It's time now for questions and comments from you about what you have just heard from the presenters and the discussions.

**Craig Watson:** Following up on your lead, Larry, one thing that Brad Erickson and Rick Stein didn't have time to drill down on addresses this question of statewide narrative: Is there a new way to imagine the messaging? I think, certainly, Matthew Wilson and others have commented on this as well. What is the new narrative?

I'm not suggesting that California has the new, long-term narrative in place, but, uniquely, to get our money this year, we bypassed the normal pathway for committee review of our budget. Not to get stuck on that detail, but instead of going through the general government-committee track for our budget, we came up for review under the committee that oversees public safety (i.e., prisons and law enforcement). To our surprise, our work in arts and corrections had gotten so much acclaim and support that the people who knew what we were doing—holistically, not just in arts and corrections—and looked at everything else we were doing programmatically, they said, “Look, the government committee is distracted. They're not going to deal with your budget. Instead, we're going to help you build a narrative that's based on public safety and community health.”

There's an agenda report that came with this year's budget increase that talks to this very issue. While all of us tend to be advocates for art for art's sake, the spiritual and collective benefits of the arts are clear. The arts are building environments that create healthier communities and community advancement.

That argument won the day, and it raced through both the Public Safety Subcommittee and then advanced to the full Budget Committee on the wings of that message. There are some interesting lessons to learn from this year's experience in California.

**Larry Meeker:** I can respond to that very briefly. In Kansas, since we are not in partnership with the NEA, we are looking to partner with prisons, education, and tourism in an effort to link any dollars that they might spend on arts-related initiatives into our bucket so that maybe we can get some money from the NEA.

But I think it's also a very productive approach to integrate the arts with other activities because, when we're isolated and there's a budget crunch, it's easy to say, “Cut it off. It's gone,” and nobody notices. If it's integral to public safety and public health, then, indeed, it's much more difficult to cut off.

**Brian J. Carter:** This follows up on what Pam Breaux said about owning the game and what Matthew Wilson said about who's at the table, who's leading, and if they have the abilities and talents to play a game that can sometimes be a little dirty and difficult and down in the trenches.

As a somewhat young artist leader, my training in advocacy is really through an arts lens; it's from other nonprofit arts leaders. I'm wondering about the need for some type of cross pollination. I heard you say that perhaps the arts need to be stealing folks who work in the environmental sector or perhaps another social issue. Is there some training that can occur for arts leaders? As someone who's gone through a graduate program and is now going through all these informal trainings, especially through WESTAF, I don't feel that I have a lot of experience with advocacy or with politics outside of the arts. I don't quite know how to do that or how to get that experience. I'm just wondering if there are any thoughts from this group about how we can bridge that gap in our experience.

**John White:** I'll say something about that. I think the best way to learn the game is to play. Getting involved in campaigns—both election campaigns as well as issue campaigns—and getting really involved with that process is how you learn it. You'll make some mistakes—hopefully they won't be big ones. But there is no substitute for it. In fact, it's absolutely essential to your role as an advocate to understand those dynamics on the ground and how they work in your state. You don't have to be a Don Quixote, but do find your place in that process and engage in it. I think it is very helpful.

**Sofia Klitzker:** We need to be more concerted about how we partner with organizations. I partner with the League of Women Voters, the United Way, Community Coalition, and a cluster of other organizations. The first year of a campaign that focuses on, maybe, registering youth to vote, we'll follow their model. But we'll bring what we bring best, which is the attention and the visibility of the arts and artists. Following the first year that we work on a campaign, we are smarter, and we can actually help direct the campaign in ways that we know are more successful. Our organization partners then start to adopt some of the ways that we have been working. But we can all start incorporating the best lessons we have learned from those community-organizing experiences. The iterative learning of campaigns has been really helpful to us.

**Matthew Wilson:** I would agree that it is important to engage and to learn from others. I would also say that there is no replacement for professional training. I was trained for four years to be an organizer. You talk about the lobbyists. They're professionals, and it's a real skill—it's not just something you pick up in a weekend of training. It is a skill; it is a craft. I think we need to recognize that. I think you're right, Brian, there are not opportunities. So a question we need to ask is: Do we rely on people from other sectors for training, or do we create our own training program?

**Cristina Aguilar:** I work outside of the arts. I am an executive director of a reproductive justice organization. The organization is 18 years old and is based in Colorado. I have been fascinated by this discussion. It is music to my ears to hear a conversation about lessons learned and models for movement building. One thing I wanted to add to this conversation is that we have been growing in our own movement work and, increasingly, we have developed very intentional partnerships with artists. We are trying to coin something called [artivism](#), which has been an interesting approach and one we have seen embraced. However, the term has also received some push back because some believe it needs to be more formally defined.

The point I want to add to this most recent discussion is that intentionality is imperative for those of us who are in the social justice spheres. We all know that when we are working with communities—especially communities of color and low-income communities—that art can be very healing. We can also see how pervasive it is in underserved communities. Often, what we really see and learn is that when we are uplifting arts and culture within communities, we are empowering our families, our youth, and our elders at every level. That is most powerful when we make tools and opportunities available for our communities to not erase who they are and, at

the same time, give them political advocacy tools that can be deployed with intentionality. For us, advocacy is about having a very intentional leadership pipeline that is intergenerational. Any entre into our organization is an entre into further leadership development, whether the new person is young or older.

To your point, Matthew, we take training very seriously. We have informal and formal ways of training our communities because we know there is greater scrutiny of our communities. Many of you who are working in the legislature—as I do as well—know that when our communities are out there speaking, they're under a higher level of scrutiny, and that is absolutely not something we take lightly.

The other thing that we have been doing recently is an artistic intervention with an artist from Oakland, [Favianna Rodriguez](#). The intervention is related to our civic engagement work. Through this project, we worked to train local artists whose mediums were not political activism. Favianna worked to train them to create workshops for our families and communities. So we were trying to have an exchange. The images created will be used for the final push of “Get Out the Vote” efforts here in Colorado. We are waiting to see what really comes out of that interchange with the artist.

I think there's a lot of innovation to be had in this area, and I am really excited to be a part of these discussions.

**Janet Brown:** I just want to say, Brian, that I am really sorry you went through a master's program that didn't offer a public policy class to prepare you for this work. Having taught for a program like that for 13 years myself, I can tell you that the experience of training and telling people what it means to change public policy—not just the theory of what public policy is about but teaching how to be an advocate and make change—is really critically important. That training is absolutely essential.

I wrote a blog a few years ago called [The Clarinet Section Needs to Play Louder](#). The difference between us and other sectors that work with nonprofit organizations generally is that they come out of political science programs, nonprofit political science programs, environmental programs, and social justice programs. They all learn this in school. We come out knowing how to play the clarinet, knowing what it means to be in rehearsal, having discipline, and having great passion—but nobody ever sits us down. What we need to do now is make sure that people get sat down and say, “We belong in this world—this very integrated world—regarding what the arts mean.”

This idea of training—if you are running a state advocacy organization and you are not doing local training for your folks, you are missing the boat. You want to be helping them to be better advocates and running for office yourself or helping someone run for office. I ran for office twice and I ran four campaigns. I can go up to a legislator and say, “Listen, I know what you have to do to justify this for us. I get it, right?” So the fact that we relate that way to decisionmakers is extremely important.

**Larry Meeker:** One of the things Cristina Aguilar touched on and that you touched on in your comment, Janet, is this notion of working on campaigns. In the midst of an election season, I think it is pretty clear that there are just two ways you can succeed with an advocacy agenda. One is you get out the vote, which means you get the people who already sympathize with you. The other way is that you change minds. I have not heard a lot in this discussion about what we are doing to change minds. I hear you talking about getting out the vote and speaking to your own constituents, but what about efforts to change minds?

**Pam Breaux:** My comment is not about changing minds per se, but I think everything I am hearing resonates: Building the movement, training, and being in the political game. In addition to that, I think we need to be bold about potentially creating a new playbook. Frankly, that gets us to own the game—or coming closer to owning the game. The creation of the new playbook—potentially for advocacy—I don't think that's something we in the arts can do alone for ourselves. I think it is perhaps the job of the lobbyist or whoever is at the table with arts leadership to work to create the next playbook, and the playbook needs to provide a vision for our next level of maturation in the political and advocacy game so that we are ready to play the long game as well as the responsive game.

**Sofia Klatzker:** I question the premise that we need to build hearts and minds anymore. I think we've won that war. I think that, at the moment, where we are is helping people understand how to secure resources and how to balance the cognitive dissonance. California legislator Jim Neilson is a great example. He is going to push up the budget, and then he is going to vote against it. But he believes—so we are not changing his mind. We are not convincing him of importance. We're not building that world anymore.

We are in a moment in which people believe, but we need to feel like we can justify the intrinsic and the instrumental simultaneously. Instrumental is how we better ourselves in places. But as for intrinsic, I think we're in a sway right now. We are very instrumental in how we're talking, but we have not gotten to the intrinsic. When you frame it—or as we frame it—I would say the way we talk about intrinsic value isn't about convincing or building or changing, I think it's about bringing along and fertilizing.

**Larry Meeker:** So the Tea Party is in our court; they just don't know it.

**Sofia Klatzker:** Who is it? Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee? Huckabee was one of our most unexpected arts-education supporters. There are some questions about who you align with, but to your point . . .

**Larry Meeker:** I've used Mike Huckabee's comments in my own lobbying.

**Brad Erickson:** We've been talking about other sectors that we might work with and learn from. I want to provide an example of something that we are currently working on in San Francisco. There, we are putting forward a proposition that would reconnect funding for the arts with the hotel tax. The tax had been there for 50-something years.



It was disconnected several years ago by the city attorney. The discontinuance applied to all the different causes that were funded by the hotel tax, including affordable housing. So we are partnering with advocacy groups that are working to address family homelessness. One in every 25 kids in San Francisco is homeless. That means one kid in every single classroom is homeless.

We are working with non-arts-advocacy groups to advance the proposition, and people are asking us, “What are the arts doing with homelessness? Is this some sort of crass and exploitive strategy? Are you exploiting homelessness to get at the arts?” Our involvement is centered on a vision for the city that is about justice and vibrancy and about who we want to be. We don't want to be a city where you have to be making six figures at the age of 22 and working at a tech firm to be able to live there. That's not what we want. The vision of a just and vibrant city—that's what we're talking about together. Why not have a bigger vision? I think that's maybe what you were talking about, Larry: What is the vision that we're bringing to our cities and our states about this bigger vision that the arts are not all of but a part of?

## Lessons from Non-Arts State-Level Advocacy Efforts

Presenters:

- Catherine Foley, Executive Director, Arizona Citizens for the Arts
- John White, Attorney
- Michael Hillerby, Director of Legislative Affairs, Kaempfer Crowell

Respondent:

- Sofia Klatzker, Executive Director, Arts for LA

**Kimberly Howard:** We seem to be in a good place to transition to talking about what we can learn from non-arts, state-level advocacy efforts. We can certainly benefit from a partnership with them, but we can also learn from them how to be successful. In my work at Portland General Electric, I work very closely with our government-affairs team, and my role as a community-education specialist has meant that I have been put front and center in the [Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics](#) (STEM) conversation.

Our company and the state of Oregon—even though we have Suzanne Bonamici as our Congresswoman, who started the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Caucus in Washington, DC—still refer to the effort as *STEM*. However, they have gone about advocating for the integral-ness of arts within the STEM conversation. They have done this by including the arts in the STEM manifesto and as part of the STEM Investment Council's strategic plan. Arts, creativity, innovation, invention, and hands-on activities are at the core of that manifesto. So even though the arts are not called out, and they are not the “A” in *STEAM*, the arts as we know them are very much a part of the overall effort.

When we talk about the maker movement; when we talk about career technical education; when we talk about science, technology, engineering, and math—all of that is, in fact, arts based.

So I am learning a lot by being a part of the STEM advocacy effort at the statewide level. Our state was very successful in obtaining a mere \$35 million for STEM and Career Technical Education (CTE). When we look at our neighbors to the north, Washington state is receiving more like \$350 million for STEM work. But, again, what can we learn from those efforts? What is it about the essence of the arts that is integral to our lives that we can use to capture the values to create a movement? Ultimately, we can talk all we want, but if we are not all together in a movement, then everybody thinks the arts are doing okay: “We’re doing okay, there’s public art everywhere. Kids play violin. Everything’s okay. You arts folks don’t need money, right?”

**Catherine “Rusty” Foley:** I have been at Arizona Citizens for the Arts for six years now. Prior to that, I served on the organization’s board of directors. Prior to that, I spent 25 years in the electric utility industry with the Salt River Project in Phoenix, which is a water and power utility. As in most places, these utilities are among the major public interests and major lobbying forces in any state. What I want to do is talk about the character of corporate lobbying. You will find some commonalities with what we have been talking about in terms of the needs in the arena of arts lobbying. Then I will talk about some of my personal observations about how the arts see themselves as a lobby and how they interact with government typically—or certainly in the state of Arizona. Then I will offer some observations regarding how we dispel what I think is—at least in my state—the feeling about public funding of the arts.

Corporate lobbyists are usually representing an industry that has very well-defined interests and reputations. When you think about utility lobbyists, you could probably list the top three or four major issues that are always at the center of regulation of any type: Environmental issues, natural resources, and taxes. Those interests not only characterize the utility industry; they are shared by many other corporate interests. Corporate lobbyists are embedded in a cadre of lobbyists with interests that are very similar to their own. One implication of this is that they are much more able to act as a cohort. They are seldom, if ever, out there on their own.

Corporate lobbyists identify with similar issues. These include issues related to human resources, employment law—really, the full arena of issues that legislatures regularly address. There’s a common communications network among all of those interests. They meet regularly. They share information. They plot strategies together. Their interests are commonalities. That also means they share the burden of advocating for those particular issues. Sometimes, one interest takes the lead on an issue. Other times, somebody else does. But that ability to develop a broad-based coalition of interests makes for a much more powerful voice in the policy process.

From the perspective of elected officials and policymakers, there is also a much clearer understanding of what the nature of corporate interests is, whether it’s an individual interest or a collective interest. Everybody knows that utilities have hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of customers whose interests are impacted by the products and services that they offer. All are

pretty clear and are thought of as being pretty integral to the lives that we lead. It doesn't take long for most policymakers to understand the depth of government regulations' impact on the work in which the utility industry is engaged.

I think most people understand the value proposition of most corporate interests. In the case of the utilities, those values are the services provided and the degree to which they contribute to economic development. But these values and services also have an impact on the environment and natural resources. Those dynamics are all understood in a very clear and distinct way. This is not necessarily the case in the world of the arts.

In the years I have been engaged in advocacy, both as a board member and now as the advocacy voice of Arizona Citizens for the Arts, my observation has been that there is less of an understanding of the opportunities to partner. Along with that—and we've had some discussion about this—there is a resistance of the arts sector to get involved in all things political. I think Anthony Radich may have struck upon a new line of inquiry with a great title, “The Errant Meteor Theory of Arts Agencies.” There really is a reluctance to see yourself—as other state agencies do—as a political entity.

I grew up professionally in the utility industry, and I will tell you everything is political in the utility industry. Everything. In the arts, we believe that the value we give to communities goes beyond the pure, tactical political environment. When the arts are addressing the issue of support from state and local governments, they are working in a political environment. There is just no two ways about it.

The arts community remains resistant to being engaged in the political sphere. This is even the case for those who acknowledge they are working in a political environment. Certainly, in the state of Arizona and many states throughout the West, the political orientation of the arts sector is not in tune with the political environment in most state Houses. Arts folks are very resistant to acknowledging that. One thing you learn as a lobbyist—and certainly as a corporate lobbyist—is that you have to play the game that is on the table. It doesn't matter if you are a Republican or a Democrat. If the Republicans wield the power in the state House, you better get to know them, and you better learn how to get along with them. And vice versa is true as well.

The real challenge that we have, which is unlike my experience in the utility industry, is that the public interests served by the arts really are less well defined in the minds of policymakers. We have not done a good job of explaining that public interest. Even in the day-to-day, on-the-ground activity in which we engage, very often that interest is very one dimensional. It is about the money: How much funding are we getting for the state arts agency? In this environment, especially in these times of scarcity, it is very problematic that success appears to hinge on how much money you get for the state arts agency.

The public value of the arts is not well understood mostly because the role of the public in support of the arts is not well understood. We all know that value, but we don't tell that story well.

I can think of three examples in Arizona's state legislature where we have prominent legislators in politically powerful positions who have arts backgrounds. One is a concert pianist. Another is a visual artist who paints in oils and pastels. And a third is also a painter. They are all Republicans, and I've heard them all say, "I like the arts, I'm an artist. I just don't think government should pay for it." I'm sure we've all heard that argument way too many times from those we have to deal with.

In addition to that public value argument, there is also a tactical piece of it. The arts sector doesn't have the kind of on-the-ground resources that other sectors' lobbies have. This is the case because those of us in the arts are not a part of a broad, shared array of interests. And we haven't figured out how to make ourselves a part of that broad array of interests. We don't have the partnerships that aid us in moving an agenda forward. Economic development is often looked at as a partner in arts advocacy, but other interests that have been mentioned today are also potential partners. These include prisons, community development, and issues of equity in education. Those are all issues that have champions in the policy process. They should be our partners, and we should seek to build those relationships.

I think the resistance to fully participate in the political process on the part of many in the arts sector leads to a reluctance to build the long-term and strong relationships that other industries have. I find that arts folks don't really like hanging out at the capitol. They don't like going to the cocktail parties that you need to go to. They don't like contributing to political campaigns or finding big donors who will make contributions for them. I believe it was Woody Allen who said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." Arts people have to think of themselves as being just like any other—pardon the term—"special interest" at the capitol. You need presence. You need to be involved. You need to participate.

Another issue is our ability to articulate our story. When our story is fully articulated, it is about more than money. Money is a means. Money is the investment that is necessary to achieve the goals that we share in common with others.

One thing that arts advocates can do well is develop and work the grassroots. And there is probably even more capacity for that. Our grassroots support already extends into the arts community. However, if you could develop an articulate story about your value and your impact beyond the sector, then your capacity for grassroots mobilization extends far beyond the arts and can include education, prison reform, community development, housing, seniors . . . .

We have a lot of wealthy and powerful arts supporters in Arizona. I am sure you do, too. But these individuals do not self-identify as arts supporters. They are developers, utility executives, and high-tech executives. They don't self-identify as arts supporters in the political process, and I think that's a challenge that we, as arts supporters, need to address so it engages them as our advocates.

**John White:** I am going to step back from these big, broad themes and talk about the practice of managing an advocacy organization. Several people in this room are getting [\\$10,000 a year from WESTAF](#) and putting it into lobbying efforts. I assume that, in some instances, after you put the funds into a lobbyist's hands, they are going to say, "Sorry I couldn't help you. See you next year." I don't, by any means, intend to denigrate the role of the lobbyist. However, as leaders in a field where you're under resourced, you have to step up in different ways to make sure that you advocate for yourself with those people who are going to advocate for you.

I am going to make my points by relating the story of a campaign that I ran. At the time, I very much I thought I was an underdog in the process. With apologies to Rusty Foley and Kimberly Howard, my opponents in this campaign were utilities. At the time, I was engaged with alternative energy and worked for several different aspects of the solar power industry.

In 2013, I was the general counsel for a residential solar company in Louisiana. We were making use of a state tax credit that had never really been looked at in the way we were looking at it. So we realized that a tax credit that had been on the books for, at that point, four years and had been used to the tune of about a million dollars in total within state's budget. We were going to balloon that out, we hoped, to increase it to \$40 million or \$50 million in the next five years. That was our plan. We knew that we couldn't just take a swing at the state budget like that, so we proactively decided to do some damage control.

I'm going to tell this story to illustrate a couple of broad things you will hear me speak about again and again. The first thing is: The money that you put toward a lobbying effort is only as good as you can direct it. What that means is you, as the constituent, have to understand the big, broad themes playing out in the body you are trying to impact. That body doesn't have to be a legislature; it can be executive administration. Today, I am going to refer to it as a *legislative process*. However, the same guidelines apply when you are lobbying executive bodies and, those of you who do it, regulatory bodies as well.

In 2013, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal was just starting to run for president. During that time, he was essentially absent from our state. As part of his election effort, he had signed Grover Norquist's "never raise tax" pledge. As a result, we heard rumblings from the administration that every tax credit on the books was going to be cut. So we were aware that Bobby Jindal was involved in one of two factions of the Republican party in Louisiana, and his faction was engaged in big fight with another prominent Republican, David Vitter. We knew that we were going to have to choose sides. We knew we were going to have to figure out who was actually going to pull our strings.

The next thing I want to discuss is leverage. We have to talk about leverage in this process—that is how these things work. When you don't have money, you have to make up for it in other ways. Our leverage in this campaign was that we did have some money, which was great. We hired our own lobbyist. But we were also in a coalition of similar organizations that had hired lobbyists through a trade organization. At this point, I want to say something about the coalition process.

A coalition can be as hurtful as it is helpful if any members of your coalition are not singing your song. We all know that the people who end up sitting around these political issue tables are typically very headstrong. They're typically very Type-A personalities. At that time, I was working for one of them. He was egomaniacal and a complete maniac, which is why I ended up riding in a white limousine for four hours to go lobby a regulator. It's an interesting story that I'll tell you another time.

The point is that when you organize a coalition of people, you are all trying to speak with one voice. When doing so, it is very important that dissonant elements in the room be managed. This is a hard thing to do, but you have to do it. One person standing up at a hearing saying something that contradicts your argument can derail an entire campaign. So be aware of those things. Also, do know that it is also okay to step away from the group and go to people directly. My point to getting engaged in this process is: Even if you've got a coalition, you need to get to know the people yourself and get to know their issues.

All politics is local, and it is never too local. When you identify your targets—the people who are actually making the decisions—find out if their sons or daughters play the clarinet. Find out where they play baseball. Find out where they go to church. These are important issues. It is never, ever too local. And if you've got somebody who does not think of themselves as an arts advocate but who has a son or daughter who is a concert pianist, you can go to that person and say, "Hey, look how this is played in your life. Look how this can play in other people's lives." It is very important to have the information about where you can apply that leverage.

My final piece of advice is: Apply leverage gently. The people in elected positions turn over, and the opponents you have today might have to be your allies tomorrow. So when you go and you sit down with somebody and you say, "I want you to vote for this instead of that," you have to make sure that you don't make those people angry. Sometimes people get angry. Sometimes it is an angry business. But if you are reasonable and you advocate for your position, my experience has been that it is okay to stand up to people and show them your position—as long as you are being considerate, kind, and reasonable. Now there are people you can never reach, of course. We'll leave those people alone.

Being an informed consumer of political information can also make all the difference in the world in terms of how your lobbyists handle your case. There are lobbyists who will take your money and not pick up the phone one time. You call them, you say, "I want to go to the capitol for media day"—or whatever day—and they say, "Great, I've been talking to my friends about you and your issue. Come with us, and we can go," and they'll sit you down in a room. They'll say, "Hi. I represent John. He's here to tell you about X,Y, or Z," then he sits back and goes to sleep. Now those guys aren't effectively advocating for you because they're just putting you in the room.

It is your job to make sure the lobbyist you hire makes calls. It is your job to make sure that the work is getting done. I even went so far as to make my own tip sheets. For those of you who don't know what lobbyists go through, they ask every person on the committee or on the floor who's making that vote, "Are you going to vote for me today?" I did the same thing. You have to do that work because the lobbyists aren't always going to do it.

Your legislators are not, for the most part, intellectual luminaries. They are everyday people: Farmers, dentists, accountants, etc. Intellectual rigor is not a requirement for the job in any state legislature. So you have to know and be aware and sensitive to that. You engage them by bringing their constituency in. You always have to make it relatable to them as people. I think this is arts advocacy's biggest untapped strength. Communicating our narrative should be a very easy thing for us, and it should be our greatest strength. We should be able to communicate the benefits of the arts to society to every politician that we speak with. I think most arts advocates recognize that, as a group, we are not very good at it. But we need to start doing it more effectively. This is a powerful tool because we have a constituency that makes its living communicating challenging ideas to people they have never even met, and we have a very large number of those people. It is a great pool of talent that can be energized—and should be energized—to speak and is a force multiplier. When you don't have traditional structures, especially money, you have to look for all those force multipliers to make your case.

I also want to say that this work is a fight. I want to be intentional in the way I speak about that. Very often, there is one dollar that is newly available, and 10 people who are going after it. You have to know who the other 9 people reaching after that dollar are. You have to be able to make the case that you deserve that dollar more than they do. In many cases, this is a zero-sum game: If they get the dollar, you are not going to get it. So at every meeting, every interaction, every cocktail hour, every handshake on the street, you need to have a clear, simple message that you can relay to the people who are making the decisions. You need to be consistent about it. You don't pay lobbyists for that—that's your job. It's the job of the advocate to do that.

Your lobbyists are going to open doors you can't get into. Your lobbyists are going to give you strategic issues that you are going to need to examine before acting on them. Actually, I am not talking about strategy at all here—I am really talking tactics. Lobbyists are valuable, and you can't do this work without them. However, by being proactive and taking responsibility for your role in the entire advocacy picture, you bring that force multiplier to bear in a way that makes everything more effective.

**Michael Hillerby:** I want to begin by noting how effective organizations work with elected officials. Such organizations understand the processes and the rules of the political world because if they don't, they will not be taken seriously. They know the budget deadlines, who sets the budget deadlines, and how all the details in the budget work together—or not. Arts advocates also need to know the personnel of the budget office and take the time to study budget documents in advance of making an argument. Often, those documents include instructions to agencies and metrics against which success is evaluated.

The organization that works effectively with the legislature and the governor's office understands that its representatives are not going to be taken seriously unless they know these things well.

Success with elected officials can include helping elected officials look good. Such officials need to hear you say, "How can I be of service to you?" Sometimes, you can be of service by explaining perspectives on legislation from a part of the community with which the official may not be greatly familiar. It can also mean knocking on doors with them and handing out flyers. Sometimes, advocates can also be of service by becoming an expert in an important policy-related area.

I received some advice early in my career that is still good today: Become valuable to someone. While becoming valuable to the chair of the Appropriations Committee would be great, becoming valuable to nearly anyone in the process who will look out for you is very important. They become like your aunt or uncle who will remind you of some of the details of the process and provide some helpful tips from time to time.

One thing that is especially important is to not give an elected official an excuse to say "no." For example, an official who is generally supportive of your issue but who isn't a major believer may say, "Great. It's a good story. I understand, and here's the money." But then, someone from your camp shows up with a different ask or a different vision, and there is an ugly fight. Then your newfound supporter has an excuse to say "no." In this case, the "no" often comes with the admonition, "Your group doesn't have its act together. I don't need to be caught in a crossfire of competing interests from within your group. Come back when you have your act together."

We have some difficult fights in the arts community. We have fights about cultural equity, and we have fights about dividing up resources between small and large organizations. Certainly, there are times when such fights are appropriate. There may even be times when the fights need to play out in the state legislature, but I would argue not very often. When someone says, "Hold on a minute," and we've all probably heard that at some point, particularly those of us who lobby for a living, "Why don't you go out in the hall and work it out and let us know when you figure it out?" Then they make you feel like it's your fault and maybe they were never going to support you at all. Don't hand them that excuse.

A number of us have to deal with legislative term limits. With term limits and the rise of the Tea Party, more and more of our elected officials have no understanding or even interest in government institutions. They don't appreciate them. They don't value them. These individuals stand in contrast to long-time legislators who are not term limited. Those legislators value the institution. They value the processes of the state Senate, they value the processes of the state House. These individuals understand what government agencies do. Term limits provide newly elected legislators with a very limited period of time to figure out the chess moves they need to make to get to where they need to go. Many of them do not care to invest in the time it takes to learn these strategies.



But learning doesn't matter to many of them. Increasingly, this group views the legislative process as more transactional in nature. So we advocates have to understand that in order to work with them effectively.

In the article "Pathways for Change," which was presented in the symposium readings, 10 strategic and tactical ways to move forward were mentioned. One of them was the ability of well-designed coalitions to support large advances. In Nevada, coalitions of conservation groups have been especially successful. The Nevada Conservation League has done an especially good job of building an effective coalition. Its partners in Nevada are Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Friends of the Wilderness, the Great Basin Resource Watch, the Audubon Society, the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Outside Las Vegas, the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada—which is a very liberal organization taking on very liberal pro-union causes, the Sierra Club, the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, Green Building Council, and the Western Resource Advocates. That is a tough coalition to manage, but they have gotten together and decided to agree on the big issues that they can agree on. They have also agreed on the issues that they can't agree on and will stay out of. Under the coalition agreement, the individual organizations can pursue their individual agendas—but not as part of the coalition.

Coalitions can be fragile and tricky to maintain. Our firm was doing a lot of health-care work. In that work, we collaborated with hospital associations. Most of the time, the hospital association and the hospitals were on the same page. However, when the big hospitals had conflicting views, it put the association and the overall health-care coalition in an interesting spot. They had to step back. At that point, the individual members had to go and have their fight over whatever that might be. Eventually, the disagreeing hospitals were able to set aside some of their individual turf issues and embrace larger objectives.

In the world of health care, we continue to assess our health care based on how much money is available to provide it. We do the same in the arts. Inflation-adjusted dollars for local and federal arts funding just continue to drop. We haven't done very well if money is our metric for assessing our success. But that's still the world we are in—money counts. One negative impact is that it is often difficult to find groups that are fixated on appropriations that can also talk about policy.

An example of a coalition that is interesting to study and has its own dirty laundry is the autism community. Autism Speaks is an amazing organization. Everybody knows it. You've watched NBC and the host of the *Today Show* and various guests regularly talking about autism. Autism Speaks was able to bring major attention to its cause by understanding how to manage and manipulate media. The organization invested money in that effort and, as a result, became very high profile. It was able to get people to join its cause and say, "This is an important issue that I know and understand, and I get it." But within the autism community, a lot like the arts community, there are people who were very angry about some of the work of the organization. One of the original key people left because Autism Speaks continued to spend money to fund research on the potential impact of vaccines on autism. Most of the autism world knows there is zero scientific evidence that there is a relationship between autism and vaccines.

As a result, there has been a big schism. In addition, there are autism advocacy organizations that really don't like Autism Speaks because they say, "You keep saying I have to be cured, that there's something wrong with me. There's not. I want society to adapt." They have a problem within that organization—a lot like ours. We can fight among ourselves in some pretty ugly ways. But the autism community has been able to take advantage of that—in some states, anyway, not necessarily all—and keep that problem out of the limelight.

The coalition I am going to talk about next, which is probably going to make some people in here unhappy, is pharma. Pharma is really smart. It never lobbies directly. It forms coalitions. When pharma wants to get a state to adopt a policy that insurance companies will pay for—very expensive new treatments, for example, designer treatments for cancer—it doesn't show up. It goes to the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, it goes to patient groups, it goes to others and says, "This is what we are trying to do to help you." And there may legitimately be some help there. Pharma understands that it is not the right messenger in some circumstances. So it has done a very good job of building coalitions and pushing them out to do that work, and it manages that message from behind the scenes.

An example of a different kind of effective coalition building is the National Rifle Association (NRA). In many states, the organization does not hire a contract lobbyist. The NRA built a coalition around a simplified message that was designed to make an emotional connection. The message was about individual liberty, protecting America, and the Constitution. That was it. There was a good [article in the \*New Yorker\*](#) by James Surowiecki featuring a quote from Ladd Everitt, who is from the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. In it, he says, "Gun control people were rattling off public health statistics to make their case while the NRA was connecting gun rights to core American values like individualism and personal liberty." In the arts, we talk about how all of these other people who are looking for money have done a better job of finding that convincing message. We've heard a lot about that in this symposium. What is our case for state funding of the arts? What have we done to make that case? The NRA has done a very good job of motivating the public to support its cause because it is making an emotional argument, and it has cultivated a coalition of grassroots organizations that join them in an informal coalition around that message.

Another approach to working with a state legislature is illustrated in the efforts of Lyft and Uber in Nevada. Full disclosure: I represented Lyft. Those organizations had no constituency when they started—you want to talk about large leaps! They came in and said, "We have an entirely different view of how things ought to be regulated, and we need to change regulations so that we can operate successfully against an entrenched industry." Partly because they were wildly popular and partly because they were all over the media—because they knew how to be all over the media—this effort had a strong head start.

We were up against a taxi-cab-regulated industry that has hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue and gives hundreds and thousands of dollars in campaign contributions.

Our clients had given none. And yet, we were very effective because we were able to grab that policy window, leverage the attention that's paid on that, and make a really large leap that otherwise might not have happened.

Part of that success had to do with a new Republican legislature last session. The legislature contained a number of very small-government Republicans who jumped on that idea. But don't be afraid to go back to Democrats, who also jumped on the idea because it was wildly popular with Millennials, who, they tend to think, are fairly Democratic.

I want to wrap up with a couple of things. Some fairly provocative things were presented in the advocacy paper included in the readings that assessed the status of the arts agencies of the '90s. When I read it, I was depressed because we continue to have the same conversation on that subject that the WESTAF board has been having over the last few years. After all that time, we are still stuck in the same discussion. One reason may be that perhaps we shouldn't look to government for large leaps—and yet we are governmental organizations.

Also, I believe that state art agencies are uncomfortable with state government and don't feel like they belong in it. In addition, there is some real dissonance between who should be driving policy: Advocates or the arts agency? How excited do we expect advocates to get if they don't have a sense that they have a role in driving policy? Finally, when you look at the size of the budgets of arts advocacy organizations, you can see that there is a return-on-investment issue. Why should I invest in such organizations if they cannot help me secure a reasonable return on my investment? If I am a large organization and the state arts agency represents less than one percent of my budget and I'm not terribly involved in policymaking, why should I participate? If I am a very small organization that is incredibly reliant on the state arts agency funding—perhaps 25 or 50 percent of my budget—I don't have any money to invest in the advocacy organization. So there are some really difficult questions that we have to ask.

**Sofia Klitzker:** I am going to provide a quick recap of what was heard from these presenters and then add one thought.

I heard that corporate lobbyists can be really good at the well-defined interests and issues. They can become quite powerful as a collective when they have identified shared interests and can come together as a powerful coalition. Although coalitions can be powerful and successful, the individual participants in the coalition introduce a new set of variables and risks. As a result, they require consideration of different means of maintaining relationships in order to sustain the coalition.

Everything is political, and everyone knows that—I think that was a pretty significant observation. A quick aside: When I took the job for Arts for LA 18 months ago, I came home and my husband said, "So you're a lobbyist," and I said, "No, no, no. It's an advocacy organization." And after six months, I was like, "Did you know that part of my job is being a lobbyist?" Even as I was accepting the position, we weren't using that language. After six months, I was like, "We are going to acknowledge this now."

We are going to actually say it out loud, 'We are an advocacy organization, and we are lobbying—and that is appropriate and it is good.' And if it is not us, then who?" So I think that embracing the political is very powerful.

We need to play the game. Politicians do not believe that government should pay for the arts. I think that point actually needs to be said out loud again. The question isn't, "Is this important?" Rather, the question is, "Who is responsible?" And who is responsible is a much bigger conversation that brings up the power of coalitions.

We need to help supporters be visible advocates. If you have big funders, how do you convey in a comfortable way to them that they need to wear the arts advocate hat and maybe this is that moment of supporters not calling themselves *advocates* or *lobbyists*. There's a different way that we just say with a fax machine, "Please just use the word 'arts' in this thing."

Success is not just having a lobbyist. I think that point is well taken. Knowing how you are going to use someone and understanding what the value is or what you are trying to do are very important. Assessing the field, assessing leverage, applying leverage gently—I like the term *gently* there. It's about human relationships. Everything that we're doing is about humanity and that our roles inside that change. Who you're working with today is someone that you're going to need to expand and figure out how to leverage tomorrow.

Something my boss has said that I learned early on is, "We all should be reading every page of the budget books for our state, our counties, and our cities and understand the metrics that they are being asked to use." But we also need to do so in order to understand where money is. In California, we learned that corrections had a lot of money in its budget. We discovered that Medicaid had a lot of money in its budget. We don't need to fight with a one-in-ten chance to secure a new dollar if we understand where money lives and what the metrics are for using those funds that also align with our work. I want to emphasize that understanding government budgets is a best practice in our field. It is something we do every year.

I want to share one more model, and it is one that speaks to the power of coalition building, but it is a slightly different take on what a coalition can do. The Los Angeles Food Council Policy is a collective-impact model that emerged from a group that came together to say, "We want to make change. We want to have healthy food for all of our residents." The coalition was constructed out of a variety of interests, including farmers' markets, food vendors, street vendors, organic labeling—and then there are also the shrimp people. There are some niche voices in there.

To establish the policies that would move the coalition forward, they developed a large task force that included many different voices, and they remained open to adding new coalition members. But then the shrimp people came together with them and said, "You know, we really need to talk about fisheries along in the coast. That's important to us." Over the course of 12 months, a policy might emerge and that gets passed off to the staff of this council.

So it isn't always a coalition of multiple organizations hoping to get together, find their point of intersection, and talk about the things that they have dissent on separately. Sometimes you can have a unifying body that brings together the different policies that emerge from all those voices and then you can be like a spoked wheel and have your advocates moving in the direction that you need in targeted ways through a coalition. So it's a really interesting model as they've been adopting new policies.

## **Discussion**

**Kimberly Howard:** Sofia, what you just said about collective impact is interesting because there is a lot of that happening in education. One of the things the arts community can learn from that sector is the benefit of identifying shared metrics. If we adopt a common goal and share metrics, we can then also share best practices among the members of that community.

One of the advocacy dynamics with state arts agencies is that many of them get into the rut of just asking for money over and over and over again. We have actually set the bar low as to what we are asking for. Money is important, but so is the big vision for the arts in a state. Currently, we are not saying, "Here is our vision. Here are our goals. And here is how we are going to get there together. Help us do that." That approach asks a state legislature to invest in a significant and long-term undertaking. Such an approach is in contrast to saying, "Here is a dollar amount that we must have."

**Sofia Klitzker:** I think we have undermined ourselves. I think that advocacy for the NEA budget based on one dollar per-capita may not get us to where we want to go. There is going to be a moment where everyone says, "We can't do anything with that. That's not enough money." Without understanding what you can get for a dollar per capita, how can you ask for per capita funds? So what does the field really need in order to fulfill its broader vision? I don't think anyone knows, and that's wild to me. Knowing that seems very important. Perhaps the first question that needs to be asked is, "How much does it cost to have a healthy and equitable cultural community?" I don't know the answer to that, but we have been positioning our efforts so that we ask for elected officials to vote for amounts of money and not what the money will buy.

**Kimberly Howard:** This is a good opportunity to open this up for discussion. Does anyone have any questions?

**Richard Stein:** I was intrigued by the challenges posed by term limits. We often see them as an obstacle, but I also think they can be an opportunity. In California, we consider if legislators who are on their way out due to term limits are arts supporters and want to leave a legacy. They want to find a way to make a difference. Over the years, we have been able to capitalize on that. I don't think you can minimize that opportunity when they're in that last year or two of their term, and they want to make their impact before they leave.

I also believe that term limits place a great burden on advocates. With term limits in place, advocates have to be looking at who is on the way up. Early on, they need to identify the city council members and other local officials who are likely to run for office. At every level of the political food chain, advocates need to have relationships so that when individuals advance to the state legislature, you already know them; you already have a relationship developed with them and can readily go to talk with them.

**Larry Meeker:** John, you made an interesting observation about term limits and how the folks who are subject to those tend to be more transactional in the way they look at the world. Do you think that applies only to new legislators? Is that something that one grows into after one has been involved in the legislative process for a time?

**John White:** I think that it is always a transaction. No matter how long you have been there, no matter what you do, a politician's job is always transactional. Transaction is really what we are talking about here—and it is a sale. You are selling your services. What I'm hearing a lot of in this symposium conversation is that people are walking onto the car dealership and walking up to the salesman, who says, "I want you to give me \$50,000," instead of, "I've got this great car for you." And that's a problem.

Not only do we need to quantify and provide a metric for the benefit that arts and culture provide society, we need to lead with that. Instead of saying, "I need \$50,000," we need to say, "Look what I can do for you. Look what I can do for your constituents. Look how your supporters are going to be happier. Let me show you how this can work and to do so, I have brought the chairman of my board. I have also brought the employer of a number of your constituents and other community leaders. I also have kids and artists available who can tell a terrific story about how much good we can do." Once they buy into it, then you tell them how much it costs.

**Michael Hillerby:** I want to address something Larry Meeker said about the arts being a tool. The California stories have been very good in corrections. Kimberly Howard reminded us that, for many of us, this is more intrinsic—it's about human value, justice, and lots of things. Here's the dirty secret, and I would advise advocates to all get to this point: Instead of having a litmus test for supporters, we as advocates should be thinking, "I don't care why you support me. I couldn't care less. I actually want to know why, but I don't care. A 'yes' vote is a 'yes' vote. It doesn't matter to me a lick that you understand that the arts are transcendent and wonderful and all of that. I don't care if you like them because they make you look good. I'll use that as a beginning point to build that relationship and do something else."

If we get hung up on, "You should like us because the arts are important" and "They only like us because it makes them look good," we will not succeed. I don't care if someone is giving support because it's a social ladder for them and they are not really invested in it. As long as they are giving, great. We can work to warm them up to the rest of it. So find out what matters to them. One of the best pieces of advice I ever heard about lobbying is: Forget everything you know and learn what they know. Figure out why it matters to them, and start there.

**Erin Graham:** Rusty, you mentioned partnerships and creating partnerships to aid in moving the arts agenda forward. I have been thinking a lot about that because I work in the STEM field. In my organization, we have fully embraced integration of the arts. It is how we talk about our work; it's in our vision. Our arts advocacy organizations often approach us and ask us to contribute data to their data-collection efforts, such as how many jobs we are creating, how we're impacting arts education, etc. And we provide those data. But what I found in relationship management and partnership management is that those arts advocacy organizations haven't made clear how they are helping us.

Can you provide us with some examples of ways that partnerships and coalitions across sectors can be maintained in a real, genuine way? I am asking this because I think that the benefit has to go both ways.

**Catherine “Rusty” Foley:** Well, I think it comes down to that issue of identifying the shared interest. Data, when it comes to arts education and its impact on STEM—I'm not sure are about jobs. I see data as being about students' learning engagement. I'll give an example.

In Arizona, we have the Helios Foundation. They operate in Arizona and in Florida and are focused around three major things: College completion, high-school graduation, and reading by the third grade. We have a metric in Arizona that kids must read by the third grade before they are moved forward. We have several very good early-childhood-based arts-integration programs in Arizona that have fabulous data and evaluations that show that engaging children through arts increases early-language development and early literacy. We have other programs that also show arts education improves student engagement, self-efficacy and how children think of themselves and, therefore, how they perform in school. They are also doing this work with teachers. So teachers are integrating this use of arts in the early grades.

A person who had received significant funding from Helios to do this kind of work said to me, "Helios doesn't care about arts education. Helios cares about reading by third grade, completing high school, and creating a college-going culture so more kids go to college and complete it." But arts clearly contribute to that objective, and so Helios had funded some of those programs. So that's the basis on which you develop the relationship. And that also applies to whether you're trying to get the Arizona Chamber of Commerce to put an investment in the state arts agency into their legislative program because it promotes economic development and community redevelopment in small communities or whatever it is. It's not the arts per se, it's what the arts contribute to society, to the issue, or whatever. That is the basis on which the dialog has to occur.

**Larry Meeker:** In Kansas, one of the very few things we did was fund an arts-integrated education demonstration in grade school and high school. Just by happenstance, the principal of the school noted that a new couple had moved to their town, as opposed to a neighboring town, because it had the arts-integrated education system. So I think, to support your point, there are reasons other than, "It's just a nice thing to do." The arts can lead to something that is of interest to the politician.

**Cristina Aguilar:** I want to step back and discuss a point that was made by both John White and Michael Hillerby about the transactional nature of working with our elected officials. As somebody who is always talking about how important it is for us to move from being transactional to transformational, I appreciate that point. The issue made me think about the doubts we have within our movement regarding that. While most certainly, it comes down to the votes of our elected officials, at the end of the day, it is also important for us to take a transformational approach to how we are working behind the scenes, whether it is within our coalition spaces or our own communities.

This is where the point about creating a narrative that is meaningful comes into play. I would argue such narratives need to be inspiring and potentially transformational. We take that approach with both our traditional and social media. I believe it's critical to consider if we really are creating narratives that are really uplifting. This is especially necessary in the arts, where there are so many different ways to develop highly creative narratives. That narrative-creating power was what I appreciated about our most recent work in partnering with arts and artists.

We also have a lot to gain from the use of social media in working with Millennials, who, when they are really inspired by something, can make it instantly go viral. There can be some transformational stories used in that space that can put pressure on our elected officials. We can also focus on the ability to craft narratives that can help shift some of those discussions that take place behind the scenes with legislators. So I think there's a lot of room in that dance between what is initially transactional and how we work toward making it transformational.

**Craig Watson:** I think we have to remember that, more often than not, the conversation with decisionmakers is not about us. It is not always about our message, our story, our singular expectation that people should support us. For example, going back to Sofia Klatzker's earlier comment about coalition building and joining forces with the PTA or the League of Women Voters, in that context, the coalition is built around the notion that we all bring value. You are not entering that coalition based on "it's all about me."

So a quick story. This came to me via Janet Brown while I was attending the Grantmakers in the Arts conference in Los Angeles. This occurred during a conference breakout session featuring work by a musician named Quetzal Flores, who is the lead guitarist in a band called [Quetzal](#). His wife Martha is the lead singer. They told a story of bringing what they called *collective songwriting* to an organizing effort in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. The effort was not centered on an arts issue or a cultural issue per se; it was really about changing the laws around street vending in Los Angeles. In traditional communities—in that community—micro finance, the ability of new immigrants to create an economic role for themselves, was the issue. And the arts came in not as "What's in it for me?" but "What can I uniquely bring to this collective-impact issue?"

I think we have to remember it's not always about us. What are we bringing? By being good partners, we build relationships that will bridge time and space.



**Janet Brown:** I would argue that if we want to be successful moving forward, that it was never about us. It is always about how we do a better job of impacting the community around us. When I think about where we have gone wrong in terms of the public perception of the arts—about institutionalized arts in our last 40 years—I believe it is because we have become specialists instead of generalists. We have taken the arts out of homes and put them in higher education programs and institutions. All of that has been specializing, specializing, specializing away from the public. When you walk down the street and ask, "Do you attend arts events?," they all say, "No." "Do you participate in the arts?," and they say, "No."

I always am grateful for the fact that I became a lobbyist in South Dakota, where it was a farmers' legislature. Nobody was paid; nobody had staff; we had very short sessions. When I went out and said I was the lobbyist for the arts, people looked at me with this glaze in their eyes. What I had to do was change my vocabulary. They would step backwards and say, "I don't know anything about the arts." And I would say, "Did you pick out your tie today, or did your wife do that for you?" Or I would say, "Did you listen to the radio this morning?" "Do you sing in the church choir?" "Do you play an instrument?" "Do you whittle?" The appropriations chair was a whittler and rancher from western South Dakota.

All of a sudden, we had a different discussion. It went from institutional to "I perform." And then we started talking about the innate nature of art making by human beings and how it defines us and how it defines our culture and our communities. I think we have become defined by institutions because we are very proud of them. But we are finally growing up. We are not a very old industry when you think about it, so we have to be careful not to be too hard on ourselves.

But at the same time, we have to recognize that art making includes arts and education, arts and health, arts and well-being, arts and corrections, arts and economic development. The arts are innate in all of those other activities. We have to learn how to talk about them. It certainly is a trend where funding is going. It's as if we've stepped back 50 years and said, "Oh my gosh—now we have to be relevant!" We've lost our relevance. We've lost how to talk about our relevance.

**Kimberly Howard:** Thank you, Janet. That actually made me think of a side conversation I've been having with one of the observers. I'm wondering if Anne Romens could share a couple of sentences about the Creating Connections work that Arts Midwest is doing with Oregon's Metropolitan Group.

**Anne Romens:** Essentially, we are taking a public will-building model and a social change movement model, and we're trying to apply those models to the field of arts and culture. We began that work by stepping back and trying to understand the public values without immediately applying arts and culture to that question. Instead, we wanted to take a moment to listen and get a better sense of what the public generally wants in their everyday lives, and then try to see where the arts fit into that picture.

A major finding of the [Creating Connections](#) research was that the public, in general, values arts, culture, and creativity because they create opportunity in people's lives to connect with themselves, to connect with friends and family, and to connect with others. From there, we built this really complicated—but hopefully helpful—message framework that unpacks some of the benefits of that connection. So, at its core, we really are trying to emphasize the value the arts can bring to our lives but also understand what the specific benefits are, how they help give a voice, how they help to grow, and how they provide happiness.

**Anthony Radich:** I have two observations. The first is regarding a conversation Rusty Foley started about coalitions. I assume that, for the most part, you need to have staff and a budget to manage a disciplined coalition. If you look at the data about advocacy groups that we reviewed at the start of the symposium, it seems like it would be very difficult to manage a disciplined, statewide coalition without sufficient staff and a budget. We need to think about that.

I also want to comment on the development of connections with members of the state legislature. Advocates need an array of connections with the legislature. However, I want to note that, in targeting legislators for attention, yes, you need to know the freshman legislator—but why not try to connect with some of the leaders? In Missouri, we connected with the Missouri majority floor leader, and that was enormously helpful. He was a major ally, and that was a nice upper, mid-level connect that was very successful. So you can pick a lot of people in the legislature to build a relationship with. Try picking from the top rather than the bottom.

**Larry Meeker:** I would like to close this section of the discussion with an observation that goes back to something Rusty Foley said that I don't think has been fully explored. Participants have noted that arts folks are often out of step with politics, and I would have to agree. I think we are somewhat out of step. I would argue, however, that the public interest in the arts is less well defined than it is in many other fields. The public value and public good of the arts are not clear. The political question always comes down to this: Why, if you have one more dollar to spend as a legislator, would you spend it on the arts, as opposed to roads, on another teacher, etc.? We live in an era when the role of government itself is being questioned. So we need to think about how we make the case for the arts.

## Advocates Look to the Future

### Presenters:

- Sofia Klatzker, Executive Director, Arts for LA
- Janet Brown, President and CEO, Grantmakers in the Arts
- Sue Gens, Executive Director, Minnesota State Arts Board

### Respondents:

- Michael Hillerby, Director of Legislative Affairs, Kaempfer Crowell
- Pam Breaux, Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

**Larry Meeker:** I would like to introduce this *Looking to the Future* section with a bit of reflection on where we have been in the first segment of this symposium. I want to do this keeping in mind that this morning's section was really a look back to where we have been and where we are today, not a look at where we should go. One thing really strikes me from the last segment: The approaches were and are very tactical. There appears to have been very little visioning and no notion that we need to constantly adapt our message. Rather, the advocacy efforts have centered on building relationships and doing things the way they have always been done.

As I reflect on where the country is today and the level of confidence the public has in government, I look at the presidential candidates. Only two candidates really have any finger on the pulse that there was change going on in this country. Those two candidates are Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. Everybody else was a deer in the headlights. The political parties are herds of deer in the headlights. The press seems to be a deer in the headlights. Where has common sense gone? How can people put up with this, that, and the other thing, always judging by what went on yesterday, and not thinking that maybe the game is changing? With that admonishment, I would like to move forward into the next session and consider whether we might need to change up our tactics a little and if we perhaps also need to change our message. There are large numbers of people who think very differently from how we do. How do we connect with them? How do we move this thing forward?

**Sofia Klatzker:** I am going to give you some tactical perspectives from where I stand. I do so from the perspective of wearing two hats. I not only sit on the boards of Californians for the Arts/California Arts Advocates, but I also lead a regional arts advocacy organization called *Arts for LA*, and we are an interesting animal. I represent a county of 88 cities and 81 school districts and 10 million residents. That is the population of Georgia in a geographic space the size of Connecticut.

Although we serve part of a state, the size of our service area means we work in a statewide manner. An exception is when we talk about local change. When we are tracking elections, we are tracking 88 different candidates for city council, mayor, school boards—that is 81 school boards—and we have the county itself. That is my larger local context.

What we have done—and Matt Wilson spoke to this earlier—is we have been shifting from being a nonprofit advocacy organization that was founded by nonprofit arts leaders to becoming a movement. That movement is centered on the vision that the arts are for everyone and that the arts need to be everywhere. We want more, and we want it visible.

Arts for LA is primarily funded by foundations and government-funding entities. A total of 80% of our budget is foundation giving. However, we remain a membership organization, so we also receive contributed income from our organizational members and our contributing members.

Because we are an advocacy organization, I need a really huge network of people I can rally at any given time. That network is comprised of non-contributing members numbering approximately 50,000 people. We have 300 individuals who actually pay a membership fee and 185 organizations that also pay a fee. But the majority of our funding flows from approximately 10 different foundations that fund the work. Our budget was \$348,000, and there were three full-time staff. This year's budget is \$650,000, and it supports four full-time staff. I am about to hire another person in the next month. With those increases, I consider us to be right sizing. If you are really trying to be an arts advocacy organization, you cannot just focus on the nonprofit arts sector. We need to figure out how to build new ways of talking with developers and lawyers and real estate people and the people we are not talking to who live here who have kids in schools. These people can be our patrons, and we already advocate on their behalf. We also have some contracts for work so that we can work on behalf of other organizations, like the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. As of June, I have rotated off all the founding board members from the board. At the present time, we are transitioning the entire board.

We engage our advocates in several ways. The primary way we engage our advocates is our training program called *Activate*. The Activate program is a nine-month fellowship. We have two strands now. One is focused solely on arts education. The other is focused on cultural policy. In the program, over the course of nine months, participants meet with sitting elected officials, learn about communication strategies, and discuss existing cultural policies. The participants are also required to design and implement an advocacy project within the fellowship period. The project can be as simple as making a relationship with a school board member because that is the person who is going to vote on an issue in which the advocate is interested.

We are starting our third year of this program and have 220 people in the current cohort. The participants from the program's first two years are now the base of my volunteer corps. I can readily rally them because they are trained, experienced, and they have an interest. Short term, long term, fast response, long build, I have a group of people on whom I can rely and who do not easily become fatigued. That is pretty extraordinary.

The Activate program also allows me to cover a lot of geographic and organizational territory. Arts for LA is currently active in 41 cities and 45 school districts. In this, my third year, I am meeting half of my goal, which is to have an ambassador/fellow in every city and in every school district so that we always have a finger on the pulse. That is part of the training. We also do a lot around elections themselves.

Activate is not just for arts administrators. Participants include parents, students, business owners, school-board members, elected officials, and others. These are the people who are a part of it—actual community members. The criterion for inclusion—I think this is important to say out loud—is not previous advocacy experience. It is actual geographic representation and demographic representation of the population. This is the most reflective and diverse group that, especially in LA, we have seen come out. These 220 people actually look like LA County, which is pretty significant.

There are two things to understand about my philosophy and the Arts for LA philosophy, which is that nothing should happen without action taking place. One thing is that we do not just talk about advocacy; you are never just going to go to a seminar about best practices. We really expect something to happen at the end of a training. The other is that, in addition to the Activate program, we invest a great deal in relationship building—positive and supportive relationship building. While there are always times when we need to push back, I would say that 95% of our advocacy is long-term, built-relationship advocacy. This approach has been very successful for us. We need to be ready to engage in reactive advocacy, such as advocacy needed to restore a budget. But we need a larger vision that extends beyond reactive advocacy. We want to advocate for what we envision the world to look like and also for the steps we need to take to get there. Aspirational, visionary advocacy means that people do not need to wait to respond. In addition, they do not get fatigued because it is actually feeding their own best interest and their own quality of life.

We also do a lot of footwork to support advocacy. We survey every candidate running for election. We survey them on what their stance is on arts and culture and where they think the arts should be made available to the public. We also hold candidate forums, and we sponsor candidate breakfasts. I recently reached out to all the runoff candidates for the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors race. The Board of Supervisors is one of the region's most powerful political seats. The body has an extraordinary budget and substantial judicial and administrative powers. We have had two candidate events; next week, we are doing the third event and after that the fourth.

The last forum we did was with a gentleman who just tanked. He had not prepared, he did not know who was in the room. Afterward, he came up to me and my board chair to have a conversation about how he could have done better—what he should have said and how we could engage in a better conversation. We had briefed in advance of the event, so it was not like we were not in touch. But that relationship building spoke a lot to the trust and understanding we have constructed. That candidate is likely to continue being in this—being active in our community in some way—even though he may not be in a Board of Supervisors position.

We also work to engage the large arts organizations. We knew we wanted to sponsor a forum in the downtown area. So we called the LA Opera, where I have a friend, and she gave us a board room. But I did not think it would be big enough. Then the head of the Music Center called me and said, “I want our board and staff people to meet the candidates, too.

How about using Founders' Room? We will just open it up to everyone, and we can co-present it with you, and we will cover all the food costs." This was perhaps the first time that the majors had approached us after seeing our value. Of course, we gave them credit in the promotion of the event. I think that was a turning point for us with the large arts organizations.

We have also transitioned from what is commonly called *Arts Day* or *Advocacy Day*. We turned that single-day focus into an *Arts Week*. My staff thinks we are crazy to take on such a workload, but the effort was a success. We started off having the county Board of Supervisors, for the very first time, declare it *Arts Week in Los Angeles County*. The next day, we were in the City of Los Angeles, and they declared it *Arts Day in the City of Los Angeles*, and then we did a tweet-out. And this is actually what I wanted to talk about. We had *Arts Day LA*, *Arts Vote*, and *Arts Week*, all with hashtags. *Arts Day LA* reached 317,000 individuals. *Arts Vote* reached 338,000 individuals, with 892 impressions. *Arts Week* reached 492,000, with over one million impressions in the course of five days. Impressions are the number of times our content is seen, so events in *Arts Week* came up more than one million times.

We accomplished this by having hashtags ready that we provided to all of our constituents. We gave them thank-you language with the Twitter handles of their elected officials so they could thank them for the work that was being funded in Los Angeles County at both the county and city levels. So they were not being tweeted with angry, weird, abusive language. We were the good-news-guys, and what we initiated got re-tweeted out. What then happened at the county the following week was that one of the supervisors put forward more money for arts education in the county arts commission's budget. That was directly related to declaring it *Arts Week* and that social media engagement piece.

One of the biggest issues confronting advocates in our region is that, to a degree, we have become victims of our own success. By framing everything over the last few years in economic terms, we have now alienated the people on the ground who are losing housing. In our area, the gentrification and cost-of-living conversation is bumping up against the economic impact conversation. I believe that we have not developed a full array of advocacy language because we have been so focused on the policymakers' interest in economic language. I would argue that we have done so at the cost of losing some trust in the community.

One way to broaden our message is to work to make certain the arts are taken into account in the development of things like health indicators. Involvement in a significant community aspiration—good health—would expand our message. But to engage in that conversation, we need to ponder what community health looks like and exactly how the arts fit into it. To be able to say out loud what we are headed toward is something that provides us with a greatly expanded argument for the arts in our society. We are currently working on this issue with the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy's graduate program. Were health to become something that is a larger part of our advocacy position, we would include the arts as a part of a set of widely accepted health indicators.

I think the concept that the arts should be considered a protected class is something we also need to figure out. I mean this in terms of time and work applied to issues of housing, language, and education. When we seek mandates that advantage the arts, are we trying to isolate ourselves in policy language, or are we trying to say that education as a whole benefits when the arts are a part of it? That is something that we really struggle with policy-wise as we look to the future. Sometimes, in advocating to return the arts to the schools, there is this interest in suing the system to compel it to mandate so many minutes to the arts. The result is that the arts become a protected system instead of being integrated across the educational experience. The same is true in the area of affordable housing for artists. Are we really trying to say that other people do not deserve the same level of affordable housing? I think we need to be aware of the consequences when we put forward the interests of our sector. We need to better understand what the impact is and also how it is being perceived by the community as a whole. After all, that is the community we claim we are advocating on behalf of.

**Janet Brown:** As I was looking over my history in this field of state arts advocacy work, which I began in 1988 as executive director of South Dakotans for the Arts, I went through a great deal of information because, at that time, we were all about field-building. We were trying to establish statewide assemblies of local arts agencies, which are part of the movement, and state advocacy organizations—or a combination thereof—in every state.

I left my South Dakota job in 2002. In 2004, I was hired as a facilitator of a convening that took place in Charleston, South Carolina. That convening was of the State Arts Advocacy League of America (SAALA), which had 12 members—all advocacy organizations—and the National Community Arts Network (NCAN), a network of service organizations, some of which were advocacy organizations. The Network had 24 members. They came together to talk about whether or not they should merge and also if they should organize under the auspices of Americans for the Arts (AFTA).

We were trepidatious about this because we had been under the auspices of Americans for the Arts before, when it was the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA), and had not really seen any progress. That affiliation had not helped us make progress toward our goals and did not provide us with leadership or resources to help other states advance. I personally went to about 12 to 15 states, many of them in this room, to talk about their advocacy organizations, and their abilities to combine statewide organizations.

We decided to combine, and I just want to read you these two paragraphs from a report I wrote in 2004, which I found on my computer.

*There is much duplication in the memberships of NCAN and SAALA. Currently, NCAN has 22 members and SAALA 14. Twenty of our member organizations could also qualify as SAALA members. Probably all but two SAALA organizations might be recognized as NCAN members.*

*Both organizations would agree that because of the overlapping of goals and shared objectives, and the lack of enough financial and human resources, we need to be more strategic in our efforts and take advantage of the economy of scale. From this recognition of these factors over the last half dozen years, has emerged our discussion of working more closely together.*

*With the conclusion of AFTA's year-long strategic planning process complimented by a \$120 million gift from philanthropist Ruth Lilly, came their goal of creating a statewide advocacy organization and a statewide service organization in every state. It became obvious that the timing was right to consider joining forces in a tangible way for all three organizations and to seriously consider the various options which would allow us to work together for the benefit of all.*

That was the promise in 2004, and you saw the results of that in the survey findings presented in the first session. So does there need to be change? Yes. I believe that success in advocacy organizations comes down to the key factors many have talked about.

Advocacy organizations need a consistent revenue source—whether it is from foundations, state arts agencies, membership, or earned income does not matter. They must have a consistent revenue source. There also has to be leadership. I love that Pam Breaux talked about South Carolina. But one thing about South Carolina that she did not mention was a consistency in leadership and trust built throughout that state for 30 years by Betty Plumb. Betty ran the state arts advocacy organization and, in more recent years, she and Ken May at the state arts agency developed and maintained a productive relationship.

The leadership of advocacy organizations also need to know how to talk effectively about what we are advocating for. Effective advocacy leaders inspire people from the smallest community to the board members of the nation's largest cultural organizations. But leadership is also transactional. Advocacy leaders also need to know how to operate an organization, how to raise money for it, how to manage staff, and know what kind of communication the organization needs. We need really good people to operate advocacy organizations, and it takes money to pay that good person. We have never built that infrastructure in this industry. Never.

Goals that intersect with government values are also important. Despite my master's degree in public administration—which means I can run your city, a frightening thought—we all know that government has values. The more we align with government values of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and equity, the more likely we are to be successful. Government is where we live and the language of government is what we need to build.

Then there has to be an element of trust. Whether you are serving your constituents or whether you are talking to politicians, the element of trust is absolutely essential. I was so blessed because the person who ran my state arts agency helped fund our organization. He was a college friend of mine, and I trusted him. Of course, this did not mean we did not fight. He was very conservative; I was not.



He was very cautious about losing his job and defaming his agency. I couldn't care less about that because my allegiance was to the arts, the arts organizations, and the people they served. There were times when he said, "You can't say that," and I said, "We have to say that because that's our base. And if we lose our base, we've lost everything."

Those are the four elements that I believe are most important to a successful state arts advocacy effort. Let me repeat them here: Consistent funding, leadership, goals that intersect with government, and trust.

In my work with Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA), which I started about nine years ago, I realized immediately that most foundations had an aversion to public policy work. Sofia Klatzker has very sophisticated foundation supporters of Arts for LA. San San Wong is here from the Barr Foundation. She also is a very sophisticated funder. However, most foundations will listen to their lawyers, who will say to them, "Oh my God, if the word 'advocacy' is there, you can't do that. That's illegal."

We spend a lot of time trying to educate our members (most of whom are private foundations and 26% of them are public agencies) that they can fund public policy change. There are many ways to engage in such activity. The group that I like to point these organizations to if their lawyers have any problems is the Alliance for Justice. The Alliance has some of the best publications about how foundations can fund public policy change and fund advocacy. They cannot fund lobbying; we all know that. We have a contract with a lobbyist in Washington, DC. GIA has a private funder who gives me a personal check for the direct lobbying cost of that lobbyist. There are ways to do this.

The education of the foundation community is critically important. Most of the people who work in the arts areas of foundations are individuals who have come out of the arts. They are not people who emerged from political science programs. They listened to their lawyers and they listened to their presidents and, as a result, they tend to become very nervous about advocacy. We are trying to change that by educating them and providing them with examples of how they can be successful in this area. Succeeding in this area is very important to us.

Foundations have played a leadership role in advocacy. We have helped build institutions such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). We did so in part because East Coast arts organizations wanted to be able to compete with the great art centers of Europe. As a result, a national cultural entity, the National Endowment for the Arts, was created that could help do that. One of the great disappointments of my 40-year career is that the NEA remains a grant-making organization. It has done so with various levels of success. In recent years, the NEA has not had a great deal of success in budgetary terms. It has not even fully recovered in nominal dollar terms from the major budget cut it received in 1995.

There has not been a lot of national leadership articulating what else can happen. I think state agencies have followed suit. I am happy that Pam Breaux is now at the helm of NASAA because change is necessary.

We are at a time of transition, where everything that was square is now malleable and moving. If we do not change with it, we are going to be in big trouble. We have to stop defining the arts by the big-box institutions that sit in the corners of our cities. It does not mean that we have to abandon them. It does mean that, in terms of funders and public dollars, we have to think about whether or not we have, indeed, been funding the arts upside down. By that I mean that we have funded the most money to the wealthiest and let the other folks fend for themselves.

At Grantmakers in the Arts, we are addressing this issue with our Racial Equity and Arts Philanthropy program and our Capitalization program. We are working to understand how funders have kept arts organizations from being well capitalized. In many respects, funders have kept arts organizations undercapitalized by establishing and exercising the parent/child relationship of grantor to grantee. The world is a complicated place, but we observe it changing—and changing rapidly. Unless we embrace change, we are going to see our organizations die.

One thing that is happening is that young people and artists have different tastes in art and different ways of consuming art. We need to reach people in completely different ways than we have in the past. The arts areas of foundations are commissioning research regarding how to become more relevant. They are doing so because they are fighting for their lives within the major foundations of which they are a part. We just saw the James Irvine Foundation step away from the arts in terms of its use of language. This major arts funder, \$30 million a year, was very much involved in the arts but whether that will continue now is very iffy. No one who currently works on its staff has art in their title.

Irvine is looking at the big picture. It is looking at poverty, and many foundations are moving in that direction. What we have to do now is to make sure that we are more relevant. As Sofia Klatzker noted, we need to be a part of the dialogue about community livability. We need to articulate what our role is in addressing issues of poverty, housing, transportation, health, corrections, and social justice.

I think that we have to view this approach as not being a disservice to artists because sometimes this becomes a *but* discussion. We need to think of it as an *and* discussion and understand that artists have been working in these areas forever. Artists are like water; they flow everywhere. We have created the institutions in which we put them into boxes. The artists will move from amateur to professional, from union to non-union whenever they can because that is how they make their living. They are the ones we need to pay more attention to.

I just want to reiterate Michael Hillerby's quote, "Forget everything you know and learn what they know. Forget your language and learn their language." It does not matter who you are talking to, that is fantastic advice.

**Sue Gens:** On the agenda, my remarks are titled *Lessons learned from successfully working with big advocacy goals in Minnesota*. I think many of you have heard some of the Minnesota story.

I want to start by very quickly providing you with a brief history of that big advocacy effort. Then I want to step back and comment on what we have learned in Minnesota and whether what took place in Minnesota could be put in place in other states.

Minnesota does not want to be the only state in which this kind of funding is possible. We are the first, obviously, but we would like to see our approach to state support for the arts adopted everywhere. This is the reverse of what some may take as a lesson from the Kansas experience: Let's see who can kill a state arts agency. Instead, I envision Minnesota as the first of many states that say, "People care enough to step up and find a way to fund the arts."

Like a great epic novel, the Minnesota story has many characters and plot twists and turns. And it unfolds over decades. The motivation was that the state arts agency and many others were really receiving the budget crumbs in Minnesota. Our appropriations to the arts were very small, and they were getting smaller. They were going up and down very erratically based on politics and based on how much money the state had.

We were doing relatively well. In 2002, the Minnesota State Arts Board budget was \$13 million, and we thought that was great. Two years later, we lost half of that, and that was pretty difficult. What was happening in Minnesota was that we had a number of legislators and advocates in a variety of interest arenas who all had the same problem. That problem was how to make a more even and higher level of funding available to these various areas of interest. The coalition and a visioning of a big goal started to coalesce around 2000. At that time, we had a Minnesota legislator who was trying to find stable funding for hunting and fishing. He was attempting to move a bill—and it was going nowhere—and a lobbyist said to him, "Well, it's going nowhere because you don't have anything in there for the Twin Cities," which, of course, is the big population center. The lobbyist made the point, "You need to find something to add to this bill that will be attractive to those metro legislators."

That was the beginning of the development of the Outdoor Heritage and the Arts Coalition. That is the point at which parks and trails came in. That is where the arts came in. The work to get the bill passed through the legislature took eight years because the coalition had to get bigger and bigger. The effort was something like working toward a supermajority. The effort needed enough people who saw enough benefit in the bill to support it. That happened in 2008. That year, there was a campaign that brought together coalitions that were interested in Outdoor Heritage (hunting, fishing, land preservation, conservation, clean water, parks and trails, and arts and cultural heritage). Approximately 350 different organizations signed on to the coalition. All of the arts and cultural and heritage organizations were a part of it. The partners were as far flung as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, and the Walker Art Center. It was really a broad coalition. A campaign was run by the gentleman who now manages the state Democratic party. He had organized and managed many political campaigns and was someone who understood politics and had significant experience in political work. He ran a brilliant campaign.

In a statewide vote, Minnesotans approved the measure in 2008. They voted to increase their sales tax to fund a wide scope of activities represented in the coalition.

The tax was approved for a period of 25 years and generates a significant amount of money. In the current two-year budget cycle, the tax yielded approximately \$650 million, which is being spread across a very wide variety of quality-of-life endeavors. The Minnesota State Arts Board went from being middle-of-the-pack in terms of state funding among the nation's state arts agencies to first in per capita funding for the arts. Actually, that ranking does not fully account for all the funds distributed to the arts through the tax mechanism because a meaningful amount goes to the arts outside the allocation processes of the state arts agency.

I now want to detail some of the lessons that were learned from this experience. For me, the most important lesson was that it was not at all about us. It was not at all about the arts. It was never about the arts and, in fact, the polling showed that if the arts had been in the lead, people would have voted against the ballot issue. That says something about the work we need to do. What sold in Minnesota was clean water. We are the land of 10,000 lakes, so the language and the ads and the information were all about water.

Another lesson was that it is okay to lose if you are going win in the end. I spent a lot of my personal non-work time on that campaign. As state employees, we were prohibited from being involved in the campaign on state time and on state property. So my involvement was as an individual and volunteer. Sometimes, the bigger goal is big enough and important enough that you can give up your own ego and repress your true primary interest (funding for the arts) and engage in the work that really needs to get done.

The seeds of the success that occurred in Minnesota really started, not in 2000, when the idea for the bill originated, but 40 years earlier when collaborative cultural leadership structure was put in place in Minnesota. We refer to this collaboration as the *three-legged stool*. One leg is comprised of a very strong advocacy organization that was created in the 1970s by the major arts institutions. The second leg is the state arts agency. Minnesota is actually the second state in the nation to have a state arts agency; we have had one since 1903. The third leg is a regional arts structure. The state is divided into 11 regions, and money is funneled through our budget to those 11 regions in the form of block grants. When the system was created, the regions were already established and had effective connections with non-arts activities in areas such as housing and transportation. They were also nicely embedded in regional governments.

Sadly, for reasons that we have talked about today—the idea that the arts are special—the regional arts organizations moved out of their larger and diverse regional structures. Many of them are now separate 501(C)3s. But the reason they are an important part of the three-legged stool is that they are very self-interested advocates. There is a reason every legislator can see value in funding the State Arts Board. They know that money is going to come back directly to their legislative district, to their county, to their city.

That three-legged structure was very valuable. For me, a lesson to take away from it is that that none of this happens overnight. Having a strong infrastructure that not only brings in the dollars but makes sure the dollars benefit all is really important.

Some of the coalition that came together in Minnesota is about what we would call the *quality of life* areas. We care about the outdoors, we care about clean water, we care about being able to go out for a hike or camping, and we care about arts and culture. But I believe in the potential to develop a wide array of coalitions. Every state is a little different. We are now starting to think about how we could build a coalition related to economic development, specifically rural economic development. Minnesota has largely been an agricultural state, and that is changing. Today, many small towns in rural Minnesota are struggling, so how do we use the arts to stimulate greater community and economic development?

One of the challenges we face is that we have a separate state agency that works specifically on arts education. So we have some silo-ing going on. We are currently considering ways to bolster that coalition. We are also interested in the health and aging coalition that might be built because Minnesota is an aging state, and we have a very large aging population that we have to think about and serve better. The other coalition that we are trying to think about and have not initiated yet is a coalition with local and city government. So much of what we see in the arts occurs at the city and county levels, especially at the city level and the community level. In spite of this, we do not have strong engagement with our League of Cities and thus with all the mayors around the state. So we are thinking about how to build some of these coalitions. I have heard many of you talk about the relationships you have already developed and I think we have a lot of arrows in our quiver. We just have not necessarily learned how to use those arrows as effectively as we can.

I want to conclude by making two general comments about state arts advocacy. One is to underscore everything that has been said today about needing people in advocacy organizations who are professionals, who are trained in community organizing, and who know how political organizations work. We would never hire a CFO who did not have some kind of training in accounting. Yet, we hire people to run advocacy organizations who are not trained in advocacy and political organizing. I also believe that the individuals who serve on the boards of advocacy organizations need to possess knowledge and skills in the area of advocacy and organizing or be trained in such skills. If they do not have this knowledge, how can they govern an advocacy organization effectively, and how can they properly evaluate the organization's staff?

Even though things are very good in Minnesota, we have some tension in our collaboration because our state advocacy organization is largely funded by the state's major institutions. They're called *guarantors*, and they represent the largest arts institutions in Minnesota. Part of the relationship that we manage is how these large organizations view the return on their investment. The advantage of this large institution-dominated advocacy is that there is a stable source of funding. The disadvantage is that they need to see a meaningful return on their investment. We make general operating grants to arts organizations in Minnesota that are larger than many states' total appropriation. There are moments when that keeps me awake at night and there are moments when I think, "Okay, I see the value." It is one of the trade-offs. For us, the work is best when there is a balance of those interests.

The other thing that has been talked about today that I absolutely second is that I see our work as public service. I think that we in the state-agency business need to be honest that our work is really about solving state problems. It is about how every person in our state can live his or her best life. We need to concentrate on how we bring the skills of the arts—creativity, imagination, innovation, collaborative sense of self and voice—to the most significant issues that our states face. I lose patience when I am in a meeting talking about how are we going to do this work and the conversation turns around to what is going to be in it for the artists because, for me, it is really, “Ask not what your state can do for you, but what you can do for your state.”

I think the more that we, as a field—and I am looking at my colleagues from state agencies around the room—can say, “We are not arts funders. We are not arts organizations. We are government agencies that have this really powerful tool of the arts to motivate our communities,” the better. How do we build a body of research? How do we take the individual story and build out a backlog of data and evidence and research that says, “Yes, we can improve the quality life of older adults.” “Yes, we can change the lives of people who have been incarcerated.” “Yes, we can make communities more tolerant because they understand and can bridge differences among cultures and among different races and ethnicities.”?

The idea of “How many people did we get into the concert hall?” is not really what we should be spending valuable time talking about. We should be spending more time asking what we have done for our communities and what we have done for our states.

**Michael Hillerby:** There is a lot there to respond to. Sue Gens, particularly, ended on a lovely note, which is that state arts agencies need to be saying, “What can we do to help solve state problems?” and not “How much money can you give us?”

I was intrigued by a lot of Sofia Klatzker’s comments. I guess my response is more of a question. What struck me was her focus on training advocates to drive the policies that they want to see in their communities. That makes Arts for LA very different from what state arts advocacy groups are doing. The state advocacy groups are largely advocating for the policies that are established by the state arts agency. Can you see yourself doing what you do in a state arts advocacy organization that holds supporting the state arts agency as one of its principal missions? Can you see yourself doing that? Would you want to disrupt that if you had the chance?

**Sofia Klatzker:** Part of the training we provide in the Activate program is rooted in the belief that to understand advocacy, one needs to understand what is happening strategically in that environment. In the program, we discuss the cultural plans of a city or a school-district policy. Instead of the advocates starting with, “We need more arts in schools,” we say, “Oh, wait. Five years ago, the school district adopted this policy. Where is it now along the path of fully realizing this policy? How can we as advocates help it achieve an already set goal?” I don’t think of our efforts as disruptive, and we don’t encourage advocates to go willy-nilly in any direction. I feel that we give them an understanding of how to navigate issues and where to start with some real information.

That said, our Arts for LA policy framework is pretty broad. It holds as policy goals that all students should have arts education, all citizens should have access to the arts, and we all need and benefit from a strong creative economy. I can pursue policies and build under those big umbrellas without having to go back to my board or drum up support. That is our policy framework.

When we talk about states and initiatives and strategies and who is doing what, part of how we are training people is to say, “Meet with your elected official and your policymakers and say, ‘This is the budget process, what are your priorities going forward? What is your timeline for achieving those priorities? How can we support you in that work?’” So I, as the advocate, I am not going off willy nilly and saying, “We should have \$30 million; we should just go out and say that.” We need to train them to know that Craig Watson knows the state budget process very well. They need to talk to him first.

**Michael Hillerby:** Thank you. I was just very curious about what you thought about that. I very much like the term *aspirational advocacy*: “What can we be?” not “What can we do with the piece that they have?,” which was really important.

Now to the Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) perspective. Janet, do you see differences? Are there things we could learn at the state arts agency and state arts advocacy levels from locals? You are very right: Some foundations have been very hesitant to be seen as advocates. The flip side of that is that foundations in many communities are profound drivers of the policy, for better or for worse.

**Janet Brown:** We talk a great deal about private foundations, but all grantmakers have more influence on behavior than they do on financial security. How the nonprofit sector behaves is totally dependent on what a funder wants, “You want a strategic plan? I’ve got one. You want a paid staff? All right, we’ve got one.” There is a lot of influence.

The interesting thing about private foundations is that, unlike public art agencies, they have no cohesiveness. You meet one funder, you’ve met one funder. There is no guiding principle except it is my money, and I will do whatever the hell I want with it. Just ask the current presidential candidates. [Laughter] It is very difficult to say what private philanthropy’s shared values are. Meanwhile, government arts agencies have values that they have to somehow step up.

We [Grantmakers in the Arts] are supporting a study on the subject of formula funding. This is something that has never been written about before in depth—and something on which many state arts agencies and local arts agencies have built their grantmaking practices. For us, there is a racial equity implication to such funding. This idea of, “We’re cutting up our pie and everyone gets 10 percent. So, if you started out at this level, you’re going to get 10 percent of that level. But if you started at a lower level, you are only going to get 10 percent of that level.” The result of that approach is to cut off growth possibilities for small arts organizations.

Changing grantmaking practices is something that foundations can do much more easily than public agencies. Government agencies will experience the pressure of politics much more strongly than private foundations. This is the case because one foundation's board of directors is just as strong as the next foundation's board of directors. As a result, we are willing to stand toe to toe. However, if I am an elected official and I receive a call from one of my political donors who sits on the board of an arts organization that just lost funding from a public art agency, there can be hell to pay—and all of you know that. That is a tough position to be in. I think it addresses our need to reflect community values and the benefit of having an advocacy army behind you that is going to be able to explain why you made the decision and who backs those decisions.

**Pam Breaux:** With respect to Los Angeles County, I appreciated hearing about the transformation from being an advocacy network to an aspirational, positive movement. I think that repositioning is extremely important. Ninety-five percent of the work in advocacy is rooted in long-term strategy and relationship building. The aspirational approach is distinct. Within our worlds of arts advocacy, that is something we do not see. That is certainly turning the model on its head, and I think the approach is important to note.

Sofia, I appreciate the fact that your Activate program is focusing on improving advocacy practices. In doing so, you are actually building capacity. As I considered the aspirational and the movement frames of advocacy and the positive approach, I find them very compelling. They are more than just a good practice; they are really compelling.

As we think about the future, that thinking brought me to a couple of comments that were made—I one by me and then one by Larry Meeker.

Larry Meeker referred to the two candidates in the presidential race who understand what the heck is going on with how people are thinking about government. He was talking about Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Those two candidates have been able to leverage something that stems back to the Pew Research I mentioned in the earlier session. That research documented significant and long-term dissatisfaction and frustration with government and a lack of trust in government. Larry, your model is interesting because it also brought me back to the Pew report that said our last aspirational moment in government—the point at which a majority of the public trusted government—was during the time when JFK was president. What Kennedy talked about, more often than not, was aspirational—for example, all the talk about putting a man on the moon. I think there is something very important in Sue Gens's comment about what you can do for your state, your country, and your locale—that dotted line between arts advocacy and where we want to go as a nation. The aspirational part of advocacy work is very important.

With respect to the foundation community, I think that Janet Brown's recipe for strengthening advocacy networks is right on the money. Clearly, consistent revenue, leadership, trust, relationships, and goals of interacting or intersecting with the goals of government are absolutely critical.



I would say that, in the area of state arts advocacy—and by that I mean the arts advocacy networks and efforts across the country—we need to focus more on those critical elements for successful advocacy. I believe that when organizations attain all four of these goals, you start seeing strength in them that we do not normally see.

I am very interested in the work that GIA has been doing to educate foundations around the issues of public policy and change. The connections between the change that foundations want to see and public policy is a key feature of creating potentially lasting change. There might be some interesting conversations to be had around where you take that conversation that you are having nationally with foundations. Some of that conversation might resonate at the local level and at the state level.

I find Janet Brown's comments around the idea of the funder-grantee relationship—and whether or not we have created a beast that is counterproductive—intriguing. Along the way, have we not taught them to fish? Have we not really increased capacity, although we have talked about capacity increases a great deal. I am not sure what to do with those thoughts yet as they relate to advocacy, but it is going to stick with me for a long time.

With respect to Minnesota, what is most intriguing from everything you have said, Sue, is your interest in building completely new coalitions, such as health coalitions and aging coalitions. Going through the statewide campaign to put in place a new funding mechanism seems to have created a paradigm shift and framework shift for you. You are thinking in completely different ways, and I think that is noteworthy and very important in the current state-arts-agency landscape. Most of us would have been happy to check off the Minnesota miracle, "I'm done. I can retire. It was a great thing." And here you are. The process—which I am sure was painful at times—has also created this framework where you are looking at what is next and all these different ways to create coalitions that do not necessarily sound like arts coalitions—and they are not because your vantage point is the public's vantage point.

In trying to absorb all of this and all of the smart things that everyone has said today, I am at an interesting moment. Part of me thinks that playing the game of politics and advocacy at the very highest levels—and in the lobbying game—takes some really powerful corporate folks in a dark room where the movement is not happening to get some important things done. I think that is one way to get some important things done in the policy realm. At the same time, the movement is an absolutely critical part of it. As I think about Anthony Radich's question this morning about what you should be investing in, we have invested in the traditional models. Should we continue, or should we not? It might be interesting to look at some new models that could be seeded, and I do not know exactly what they all are, but some of them have a corporate approach and perhaps some of them have a different kind of approach and are more movement generated.

## Discussion

**Brian J. Carter:** In this conversation, there has been talk of equity, inclusion, and access in the arts. I feel these issues are the greatest challenges facing the arts field. I also think they present the field with some of its the greatest opportunities. In many respects, the arts field has to get its act together when it comes to racial equity, especially in terms of representation. The field needs to ask questions such as, “Who is involved in our work?” “What is recognized through our exhibits and programs and whose forms are valued as art?” and “Who is on the board and who is on the staff?” I find it difficult to imagine this field, with its current personnel, defining the value of art when the field cannot effectively define itself. When it comes to issues of equity, sexuality, gender—but most importantly, race—the field remains in its infancy.

When we talk about equity, I am always going to start and probably end with racial equity. I believe there is intersectionality between advocacy and where the arts are in their long-term evolution when it comes to racial equity. I am just not hearing a lot of that in the discussion today. I wonder if it is germane. I wonder, when it comes to the brutal game of politics, if the diversity of your advocacy coalition matters. Yesterday, when we were looking at statistics of elected state legislators, it was definitely hegemonic. In that way, it reminded me of times I have been invited to advocate, and sometimes I feel like the black guy in the back of the room who has no role on the agenda. I wonder if that is smart politically. Maybe it is shortsighted. This is to Larry Meeker’s point: What is the vision? What is something larger about the arts? I feel like racial equity is that larger vision. I think it allows for a larger coalition around some of these social issues we have been talking about, affordability of housing, the prison system, and other social justice issues. It is the intersectionality of those and arts, from a coalition-building standpoint, that I think is our richest opportunity: To create a vision that is different and that might result in a playbook that is a little bit different. Different language leads to different actions. I am just not hearing a lot of that language today.

**Larry Meeker:** Let me make an observation about Johnson County, Kansas, which has historically been the economic engine for metropolitan Kansas City. A few years ago, Johnson County undertook a 2030 visioning process. I was involved in the arts and cultural piece of that. They invited high school students in, and it was a very diverse group. We paid a lot of attention to that diversity. One of the things that came up that I thought was very surprising was that a number of students, independent of each other, suggested that we needed to have more arts and cultural activities to help us bridge our own divides in the community. Many of these folks were new to the community. They may have come from Japan or Mexico or Korea or wherever. I thought they were very insightful. Who but the arts community is better positioned to help us understand each other and to bring us together to build community? I think, in some sense, that is some of what you are talking about. It is a role the arts can play in the larger scheme of building community. Obviously, today we need to build a lot of community when it comes to race.

**Sofia Klitzker:** I am so glad you brought that up. In Los Angeles, there is an initiative that was initiated in November. The initiative is called *The Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative* (CEII). It arose from one of our county Board of Supervisors slapping the hand of one of our major cultural organizations for hiring another white person in a high-level position and having a fully white board. The organization was told, "This is unacceptable. You are publicly funded, so we need to look at your practices." Instead of it just being a single hand slap, they tasked the Arts Commission with coming up with a series of recommendations. The Commission held 12 town hall meetings and managed 5 working groups. Out of this activity, 16 recommendations were developed.

The report was requested in a very short period of time. As a result, when it was brought to the advisory group, everyone wanted more discussion. The sense was, "If we are going to do this, we actually need to do this well. We cannot do this halfway to meet a deadline and not fulfill the needs of the actual community." One of the concerns was that there needed to be a better understanding of terms. The advisory group felt that words in the report meant very different things to different people, not to mention the order in which different activities should take place. Questions arose, such as: Are we going to work on cultural equity first? Inclusion first? Are we going to work on staffing pathways? Do we need better definitions of terms? Can we do all this simultaneously? The advisory committee made the point that just the intent was not enough. Getting to that, this is how the hard work happens. It is messy. And it is taking some time. While they did not adopt the 16 recommendations, they had the presence of mind to ask for an extension. Now, I believe the report will not be presented to the supervisors until March, so there will be more time to process it through. I think that whole process is worth looking at. It will ultimately have an impact either as a cautionary tale or as an excellent how-to-try-and-do-this-correctly. But yes, it's a hot mess right now.

**Matthew Wilson:** I think you bring up a great point, and it is something that is a real focus for us. We look at it on a number of different levels. The first is in our mission statement, in which our core values reflect our commitment to racial equity. Then, going to our infrastructure, we work to ensure that the makeup of our board, our staff, and our leadership reflect our core values and the fact that we are truly trying to build a broad political base. Then we have to be inclusive in our outreach and our organizing. We are focused on that. The third piece is just what we are working on: What is our platform? In this area, I believe we need to go beyond the basic funding of the arts issue. We are starting to work on Title 1 funding for arts education, which is a vehicle to use money that is going to under resourced communities for arts education. We are also starting to work with community-development corporations to make sure that placemaking and design are part of that program. So we look at this issue as being rooted in our mission and values and that is then reflected in our infrastructure and our programs. Along the way, we want to make certain that all of our efforts are inclusive and that they impact the broad sector of the population.

**Janet Brown:** Thank you, Brian, for talking about this. Grantmakers in the Arts has been on a pathway for the last six years. During the first five years, we kept it under wraps because it was hard for us to figure out what we were talking about.

After five years, last March, we released our statement of purpose. We redid it this year to include recommendations, definitions, and a statement about why it is we are focusing on racial equity in arts philanthropy, as opposed to all the other inequities of the world. This is one of the areas on which grantmakers and state agencies can have a real impact.

Interestingly enough, what happened in Los Angeles just happened in the last go-around with the capitalization grants. All of a sudden, county commissioners were saying, "Why are you giving all your money to these white organizations? There are no organizations of color on this list." They then said, "You create a policy right now, and we are going to give you a million dollars to give out to somebody else." So now, all of a sudden, you have elected officials developing detailed strategies and rules of regulations for programs. This is not what you want. You want to be ahead of that curve. State legislatures are different. Seattle is very different from Los Angeles, which is very different from Kansas City. I think this is an area where my plea is always this: If you are white and you do not understand what structural and systemic racism is, please get training. Please read. Please do something. We grew up in a culture and we live in a power structure in which we do not even realize the racist activities that go on around us. If you are in control of an institution, I would suggest you hire someone to do a racial equity audit of your language, of your personnel, and of your policies to make sure that you are not sending messages that you do not even know you are sending.

These are all things that we have done at Grantmakers in the Arts. They have made us a stronger organization. They have made us a more transparent and honest organization. We are working in a field that, honestly, the perception of the world is that we are the 1%, not the 99%. We are the 1%. And that perception has to change. The door is open to talk about this transparently, to educate your boards, your council people, to get training, to do all the things we need to do to be better. Grantmakers are power brokers. We no longer even use *diversity inclusion*, which are words that I think are racist in themselves because we have been trying to do that for 40 years, and where has that gotten us? Don't we wish we had all the money that was given to all these institutions to diversify their boards? Change is what needs to happen.

**Larry Meeker:** Brian, let me turn it back to you. You have heard three responses. What do you think? What do you hear?

**Brian J. Carter:** I hear that there is work that needs to be done. But what I am looking for is a larger vision for the arts. So, yes, at an institutional level, I agree, you have got to actively integrate equity into the mission and into the values of your organization. You cannot simply have a diversity or an equity statement in a blue box separate from your operations and sitting apart from your overall mission. I just wonder if this particular banner has some utility—has some use when it comes to leveraging funding in a way that we have not before. Everybody's comments made sense about how you can increase equity at the institutional level, at the city level, and at the county and state level. What I am talking about is combining those efforts into a larger national arts effort that could be used as a banner under which we can advance collectively to accomplish a larger vision.

**Kimberly Howard:** This conversation is taking a compelling turn, especially when you think about the things that most people do not think about in terms of equity. When I think about equity—and arts education, in particular—I think about people who are arts supporters who do not call themselves *arts supporters*, and yet their child is a concert pianist. Or the parent whose children are taking music lessons, going to theater camp, and taking tap dancing lessons, but the parent doesn't realize that those kinds of opportunities are not available for all children—or the parent does realize it and doesn't care. Frankly, the poverty issue is a big issue across the country, especially in our rural communities. The poverty issue has a huge impact on equity in the arts.

**Cristina Aguilar:** I am going to step back to one of the things that Brian Carter said. First, I want to thank him for his comments because I definitely was feeling a lot of what he stated. One of the things that he lifted up is the possibility of intersectionality. My organization is a reproductive justice organization. We were started by women of color 20 years ago in direct response to the “choice” movement, saying that, “Choice is not afforded to low-income women and women of color.” What we work toward is the eradication of barriers to an individual's ability to even walk into a health-care office. We talk about transportation issues—for example, if you are in an area in which it is unsafe for you to walk to a bus stop. Let's talk about LGBTQ liberation from the perspective of transgender people of color being among the most marginalized in our community.

The partnerships in which we have been engaging with the arts have revealed that what we have in common is not only our work with lifting up all communities around arts and culture but also the benefits of being at an intersection of the arts with the healing arts. So much of the arts have emerged from underserved communities, especially low-income communities and communities of color. Then those art forms have been held within institutions that feel inaccessible in much the same ways that not having access to paid sick days can feel inaccessible or not having access to a car can feel inaccessible. What we have in common, I believe, as somebody who is steeped in the social justice movement, is that we are really calling for access to a humane quality of life. I think, from that perspective, the many ways we talk about our work and our movement is as a human rights issue.

Often, what we end up talking about feels so radical. I cannot wait until it is no longer radical to say that people deserve to have access to health care, paid sick days, family medical leave, etc. To have access to the arts—not just on the free days, when museum visitors may be stigmatized by showing up, and people might judge them by what they look like. All this links up to this idea of aspirational activism. This why I love Favianna Rodriguez, an artist who we work with. She talks about what I fundamentally believe in. I am an activist through and through, but I am tired of talking about what I am against. I really think we are going to have to change and talk about what we are for. There is so much commonality in our spaces in terms of what we are for. We need to start embracing the idea of intersectionality as just simply being the intersections of our lives. Not one of our lives is single issue. I think we are forced to compartmentalize at times, but I think that really is an outdated notion.

**Anthony Radich:** I want to thank Sue Gens for her comments on government and the place for the state arts agencies within state government. I especially thank her because her comments prompted an insight. In describing this insight, I just might insult some of the state arts agency directors I work with every day. That insight is this: In many ways, state arts agency directors were the original Tea Party people. They came from outside of government, and they did not really want to fit into state government. Instead, they wanted to do what they could for the arts while in state government and then get out. They did not care about the institution of state government nor the long-term health and future of that institution. That is an unfortunate theme in the history of the state arts agency movement. If we are going to be effective as a movement, we must move beyond that approach. You cannot just be a burr in the saddle of state government. Within state government, you can help your agency by being some level of a cooperator. You can also be an innovator that sets an example for others. But to really be successful in state government, you have to embrace the processes of state government, care about their worth, and use them to your advantage.

Without a doubt, we are in a period of significant change. I think we all understand that we are near the conclusion—if not at the conclusion—of a period of growth in the arts in the United States that we have been engaged in since the mid-1960s. During that entire growth period, the consensus vision of major arts funders was embedded in an imperative to build traditional institutions. The broader culture envisioned such institutions in the 1950s and started realizing them starting in the mid-'60s. Now we have major traditional arts institutions everywhere, but they reflect a vision for the arts that was formed in about 1959. One of the issues we are dealing with today is the concluding moments of that historic vision.

A good example of this change in vision has manifest itself in Denver. There, the city is considering building a new symphony hall. The city currently has a symphony hall that seats 2,400. The proposed new hall will be designed to seat slightly more than 1,000 because that is about the average day's size of the Denver audience for symphonic music. This downsizing is occurring as Denver is booming. However, the city does not now have—nor is it projected to have—an audience of 2,400 for symphonic music. That kind of downsizing is occurring everywhere. We have come to the implementation point for a new vision. That vision continues to emerge, and I cannot fully describe it. However, we would do well to attempt to imagine it. Our field has been very reticent and ineffectual about developing big, ambitious visions. In this symposium, we have heard many threads of what that vision could be developed into. In fact, as a field, we should be able to develop numerous scenarios and alternative visions for the future. The visions are out there, but they need to be articulated then discussed, and then progress toward realizing them needs to be structured.

**Larry Meeker:** At this point, I want to open this up to comments from symposium observers.

**Loie Fecteau:** In New Mexico, we have been talking a lot about creative placemaking, arts and cultural districts, and affordable housing for artists. I was really struck by Sofia Klatzker's comments about why we do these things to advantage artists above others. We embrace equity—but do we really?

Perhaps we are looking too narrowly and need to be more connected to the social justice movement. In terms of intersections, I am not sure where the equity train of thought is going to go for me, but I do know that I want to think about equity and the arts with a broader brush. I serve on the NASAA board, and I am also chairing the governance committee. In that task, we are seeking a higher level of diversity in our governance and equity inclusion in all of our work. This discussion has planted some seeds for me about where that is going to go. In some ways, how we define who we are will also shape folks who might be appreciative or become involved or are advocates.

**Janet Brown:** In terms of racial equity and the changing demographics of the country, there are changes in every rural community and every state. These changes prompt us to ask, “What defines a culturally specific organization?” Is it the arts on the stage? Is it the audience? Is it the art that they are performing? Traditionally, we have considered *culturally specific* to only refer to organizations of color. That is one question. A second question is: When we work in the area of arts education and when we talk about access, whose art are children accessing? When we reflect the thoughts and definitions of 1959, 1960, and 1965, are we just perpetuating the standards that we set back then?

**Sofia Klitzker:** The Rosenthal Family Foundation in Los Angeles has been trying to determine how it can really shift the conversation and the funding around arts education. The foundation brought together focus groups of parents from different kinds of school districts who represented different parts of Los Angeles, Compton, Culver City, and other places. In the groups, we talked to parents about what they knew was happening in the school and whether or not their children were getting art. During the first hour, the parents said, “No, no, no. There is nothing happening in the arts.” One funder who was viewing the conversation from behind a one-way window was apoplectic because the funders were underwriting arts activities in all of the schools engaged in the focus-group sessions. However, after about an hour of conversation, the parents started to talk. They said, “Well, we did have that world festival dance thing, and then the mariachi band came in, and we had to do that on Thursday afternoon, then we did this other thing.” You had the realization that they were not considering these cultural experiences as part of the formal arts education. In addition, they were sometimes considering career tech and design classes as arts education.

Moving forward, we need to be aware that we are all defining art education in the same way. It is very difficult to always keep that in mind. At another moment they asked, “What language will help you promote arts education?” And we found that they do not care about the creative economy as a concept. The parents understood that there were cultural activities taking place on campus that were not related to what was happening in the classroom during school time. We might learn from this and change our messaging to talk about all the things that are happening on a school day as being part of learning. Of course, we also need to better integrate those activities so that they are considered part of the overall curriculum.

**Kimberly Howard:** I have a question for the group as a whole. We have been talking a lot about coalitions, and we heard from Minnesota about its innovative collaboration. I am wondering if—in other states—someone wants to share what other collaborations are bubbling up.

**Craig Watson:** One collaboration that I think is worthy of note is our arts education collaboration called [CreateCA](#). We recently co-sponsored an equity summit with Arts for LA and CreateCA down in Los Angeles. I have the latest version of an equity statement, which was put together by CreateCA. The coalition is made up of five organizations, including the California Arts Council, the California Department of Education, the California Parent Teacher Association (which is the largest PTA in the nation), the County Superintendents Association, and the California Alliance for Arts Education. It is a collective impact model and has been funded by the NEA under its new collective impact funding strategy. Here is the statement:

CreateCA defines equity in arts education as the right of every student to access the powerful, high-quality standards-based arts learning pre-K12. All students from every culture, geographic region, and socioeconomic level must have the opportunity to fully develop their own artistic cultural and linguistic heritage while expanding opportunities to study and explore artistic expressions across different cultures and time periods.

## Summary Thoughts for the Day

- Matthew Wilson, Executive Director, MASSCreative
- Kimberly Howard, Community Education Specialist, Portland General Electric Foundation
- Larry Meeker, Chair, Kansas Creative Industries Commission

**Matthew Wilson:** When I look at the WESTAF survey of advocacy groups, I observe that the advocacy organizations that are making a difference are often the organizations with full-time staff, especially those with two or four full-time staff. Janet Brown raised the issue of how we start building that capacity. I believe we can start by thinking through the structure and success paths for various arts advocacy organization models. We can articulate those models and can work to effectively implement them. Whether it is the chamber model or the movement model or yet another type of model, I think we need to create frameworks and offer them as possible ways for advocacy groups to organize themselves—and also a way to evaluate their success.

Advocacy groups could also be rated according to their complexity. For example, there could be Class A, Class B, and Class C advocacy groups. The Class B and Class C groups may want start with a limited number of staff and complexity, with the goal of ramping up over time to becoming a Class A group. In addition to providing coherent and workable models with which to operate advocacy groups, this kind of categorization would help us better study—and hopefully better understand—what works and what does not in terms of arts advocacy organizations.



In summary, we need to find a way to more consistently build highly effective state arts advocacy organizations.

We also need to work harder at getting out of the boxes or the silos that we have put ourselves in for the past 40 years. Many arts advocates think we are only working to fund the state arts agency. While the state arts agency is always going to be a part of our work, look at what California has done with the Arts in Corrections program. We need to get ourselves out of the box of just funding the arts agency and think more broadly about what we work on. Also, we need to change our language. At MASSCreative, when we started doing electoral work in a non-partisan way and started saying, “Support the community,” in saying that, the advocates were not only talking about the arts community; they were talking about the vision for a stronger overall economy, a stronger overall education system, and more livable communities for everyone. We now talk about building a stronger economy in Massachusetts by making sure that creative workers are a key part of the economy and the need for a strong education system in Massachusetts with arts education as a core piece of it. The first box to get out of is the box that limits what we are working on and how we are talking about it.

The second box we need to address is the partnership piece. Moving into this sector four years ago, I came without any preconceptions. I found that the arts community, certainly in Massachusetts, had silo-ed itself out on the side. I had worked for 30 years in politics, and I did not know anybody in the arts community, which is telling. I think it is important that we partner and, Rusty, I think your explanation about how the corporate lobbyists do it is a good analysis. As you outlined, they are part of a team, and they work as a team. We do not work as a team in Massachusetts. When the governor vetoed the arts this year and then cut it in half, people who engaged in lobbying for the override were almost exclusively members of the arts community. We did not have the community-development folks, and we did not have the healthcare folks on our team, nor did we have the education folks. I understand why that is and it is because we never help them—why should they come help us? We need to go out and create partnerships in which we help our partners, and those partners then help us.

We then need to reconsider our mission. Our mission is not to build a strong arts community. Rather, our mission is build a more vibrant, healthy, and equitable Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, we have a number of partners who have that same mission, and these are community-development corporations, public health associations, educators, and chambers of commerce.

We need to expand beyond the grasstops advocacy that has been predominant in the arts-advocacy community over the years. We need to create a situation in which the executive directors work to engage their audiences and supporters—a grassroots base—in advocacy activities.

This is where Sofia Klatzker’s work is groundbreaking and so important. We need to train the grassroots, ordinary folks who have this passion to do this work. We need them to tell their story, and those stories are what our leaders listen to.

We need to move beyond the grasstops approach to advocacy. We need to still work with the grasstops, but we need to work more effectively with the grassroots.

One of the challenging things about our community is that everybody loves us. Everyone is an arts supporter, and that's great. We think everyone likes us, and we do not want to turn anybody off. Saul Alinsky, who is the great organizer from the '60s and '70s, says that to make change, you have got to create a little heat, a little friction, a little uncomfortable-ness. Obviously, you have to be strategic in doing that, yet I have found that the arts community is often uncomfortable with getting people angry or a little uncomfortable. You cannot create change unless you do that. How do we get in that mindset to go, "Yes, I like you, but you have got to do a little bit more. You cannot just say you like us; you have to be a champion." In order to make a difference, we need to figure out how to create that heat and that friction.

We also need to dive into the political box. Everything is inherently political, and not only *can* we be engaged in political activity, but we *have* to be. We have to do it if we are to elevate ourselves and elevate our visions and our values to the level that they need to be considered. This is not easy to do. You have got to know how to do it. It is a skill and a craft. It is how we become better citizens and better political advocates.

The final thing is that we need to get the major cultural institutions out of their box, out of their special interest box. If the majors just say, "I am only going to play in this if I directly get more," that's not going to work. Advocacy must have a broader agenda. We need the majors on board. They need to look beyond their self-interest of getting another \$50,000 or \$100,000 and recognize a broader agenda for the sector. And that broader agenda is building a more vibrant and healthy community.

**Kimberly Howard:** There were a couple of things that kept bubbling up for me today. One of them was a conversation around poverty. I do not know how many of you are familiar with Angela Blanchard and the [Neighborhood Centers](#) project in Houston. Blanchard's work with Neighborhood Centers focuses on using the resources, achievements, and strengths of the community to build on, while moving away from terms like *brokenness*, *in need*, or *at risk*. When we consider what our big vision for the arts might be, we as an arts community need to think about those strengths, assets, and resources—and not what is broken.

I believe Michael Hillerby said that we need to become invaluable to someone. I hear that a lot from our government-affairs people. I think the arts need to become invaluable to the community. How we do that, I don't know. I do not have the answer. But as soon as we become invaluable to the community, the arts will be thought of as part of the solution every time someone is seeking to resolve an issue. Whether it is poverty or education or corrections institutions or equity, the arts need to be central and thought of as central to the way we solve those issues. That is the state in which we need to be in the future—the vision we have to have in our sights.

Also, once we come up with the big vision—and this is my corporate-speak—we need to be able to show clear, measurable outcomes. That is grant-speak, too. We all have to talk to our funders—public and private—about that. We need clear, measurable outcomes. If we are working on shared outcomes, such as collective-impact models, all the better because then we will be able to find the right way to measure our collective successes.

**Larry Meeker:** Change is afoot. But change is always afoot. As opening speaker Tim Storey said, on average, 13 state legislatures turn over in terms of party control every election cycle. We need to adapt to change. Today's political scene suggests that there is a great deal of change going on.

Today there are many people whose thinking we do not fully understand. Brian Carter opened up that topic. I believe that it is impossible for any of us who are not black to fully understand the black experience. I also believe that it is not possible for any of us who are male to fully understand the female perspective or experience. Only with relationships can we begin to bridge some of those divides.

I have heard a great deal today about something that I think is very important. That is partnering with other agencies—other groups with other interests. Partnering is a very viable way to build powerful support for the arts. Whether the partners for the arts are groups working to improve conditions in prison, address poverty, or ensure that rural citizens have access to the Internet, I think the arts can play a significant role in those activities.

What I see bubbling out of all of this are two models for change. One model is rooted in the development of an overarching message about the arts and their importance. I suspect that if we could accomplish that, that overarching message would help us begin to create those other messages about how the arts can play a role in rural development, how the arts can play a role in helping us with racial divides, and how the arts can play a role in helping us have healthier communities.

Another model for change is rooted in our ability to reach out to others and reinterpret what we want to do in broader terms that include them. We need to learn to experience the arts in somebody else's shoes. As I mentioned earlier today, those 42,000-year-old cave drawings illustrate that primal links between art and life have existed for a very long time. I believe that the arts contain thoughts and experiences that can link each and every one of us across gender lines, across our racial divides, and across many other divides. In part, it is our responsibility to find out what that is and to begin to move it forward in terms of messaging.

**Matthew Wilson:** As I have observed the equity and inclusion battle play out within the arts community, I have, at times, become angry to see what is happening and also sad to see it happening. In times of sorrow, celebration, and strife, we have always turned to art and artists to help us make sense of them. Storytellers, poets, visual artists, and musicians have always helped society with this work.

I am saddened to think that because the arts community is not more advanced on issues of race, we may be missing the opportunity to help the larger society address these issues. We cannot do so if we are too angry with one another within the arts community. I hope we can rise to the occasion.

As a field, we need to admit that what we all thought of as being colorblind and what we all thought of as being equitable and inclusive has not been. I want to believe that the major cultural organizations that I have been a part of have been doing the right thing by trying, but maybe we and they are not trying hard enough. I would be sorry to see the arts and artists unable to be a part of getting to a better position on issues of race because we could not get our own house in order.

**Larry Meeker:** I want to share an experience from probably 20 years ago. At that time, I was a community-affairs officer at the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City. One of our obligations was to try to help banks better understand credit opportunities in low-income and minority neighborhoods. I created what I called the *Fair Lending Workshop*. It was designed for bankers, but it also served the occasional community group. The outcomes of the workshops were interesting. Here is how the workshop setup worked. I would divide my audience, usually 25 to 30 people, into four role-playing groups. The groups were: white males, females, low-income individuals, and whatever minority group was most prevalent in the area. In the first exercise, participants were asked to (in 60 seconds or less) create the longest list they possibly could of the traits of their group. I would note that you cannot be politically correct when you are talking 60 seconds. That was the point. It was predictable. The low-income role-playing group described a lack of education, family dysfunction, and poverty as characteristics of their assigned group. The women's role-playing group described itself as more barefoot and pregnant than I had even suspected at that time. The white male role-playing group described themselves as emotionally handicapped but also as individuals with money and power.

In the second part of the exercise, I asked the participants to voice their perceptions of banks and bankers from the perspectives of their assigned roles. A common comment was that the bank environment was very off-putting unless you were a white male. In addition, we received comments that the terms used to describe products were very off-putting and were sometimes presented in ways that were difficult to understand. What became apparent after that exercise was everybody felt a little put off by the bank except for the white males. And why shouldn't that group feel comfortable with the bank? The bankers were their friends—people with whom they shared common experiences and values.

In the third part of the exercise, participants were asked to take on the role of the board of directors of the bank and to run it safely, soundly, and profitably. The most interesting actions dealt with marketing. We asked the group to consider how they would approach their marketing tasks if their bank, for example, only served women or white men. What was fascinating is that each of these groups created a very different bank. White males liked what we already have in place. Women often would put a child-care area in the bank so the kids could be entertained while mom was doing business. That is part of the challenge we face on any front with race.

If we put ourselves in the shoes of somebody else, we can improve our understanding of how they experience the world. Will we ever fully understand the experiences of others? Clearly not. Nor can the black community fully understand the privilege of the white community. We can only project what some of that is. There is a big difference between white males who, when they walk into the bank, expect to receive credit and low-income or minority people who, when they walk into the bank, don't expect the credit. Thus, when the banker says to a minority borrower, "You get the loan," that client is often not inclined to negotiate the rate. If I am a white male, the first thing I do is say, "C'mon, my buddy here that I've been playing golf with, he got a lower rate. I've got to get slightly lower than him so I have one-upmanship when I play golf." Those are things we do differently. As we begin to bridge these divides, the arts can play a similar kind of role. They can help bring us together to a common conversation.

**Kimberly Howard:** I want to clarify some definitions. I think the arts community has done a really great job with *diversity*. *Equity*, however, is a whole different bag of potatoes. When we talk about equity, we are talking about historical and systemic barriers keeping people from reaching their full potential. We are talking about differences in opportunity, advancement, and development. That is what equity is. It is different from diversity, which is about celebrating a mix of differences. Equity is also different from *inclusion*, which is about providing a place at the table. I just want to be sure that we all agree to the same definitions and that we agree that all are needed for the full richness of the conversation.

**Larry Meeker:** Sometimes, when we talk about inclusion, we examine the diversity of our boards. If, then, for example, we elect a black person on the board, is the black community really represented? If we were in a black organization where the whites were a minority, would any of us who were white think we represented the entire white population? Therein lies part of the problem.

**Cristina Aguilar:** The example that you just gave was troubling to me for many reasons and reminded me of something that was brought up earlier that needs to be underscored. I believe Janet Brown raised the point about tackling privilege and oppression within our own organizations. What I immediately thought about was the difference between having a statement on racial equity as an example and being an organization that is committed to being anti-racist. There is a wonderful example, which I just wanted to share.

I did some work with the Western States Center and an LGBTQ organization in Colorado. The Center has been an amazing resource, and they are very committed to being an anti-racist organization. They took the time and resources to effectively document what this process was. It took years and it was painful—and not pretty. However, in the end, what they achieved has become a model in the social justice movement. I recommend that organization as a resource. I recommend them because they have a deep understanding of the spaces I navigate as an individual, as a person representing my organization or in my role in identifying as queer and Latina. There is a great benefit to reaching the vision for equity.

Look at the state of black Americans in the United States, the Black Lives Matter movement, the many painful breakdowns that we have seen. There is a shift occurring in the area of racial equity, whether we are on board with it or not. And there is going to be more change. I am hopeful we can all challenge the racism embedded in our society. We need to start by looking deep within ourselves and also into our communities, and we also need to review every single role we play with the power that we have.

**Janet Brown:** I want to let everyone here know about two projects we [Grantmakers in the Arts] are working on. One is a day-long workshop on racial equity for grantmakers and arts philanthropy that will seek to identify the systemic racism and the power innate in most everyone's thinking. I also want to acquaint you with some case studies and some research we have done this fall. The purpose of our equity work goes back to what Kimberly Howard was talking about—especially an understanding of what *equity* really means. One thing it means is that we have systemically left out organizations—especially organizations of artists—from our funding pipeline. These organizations frequently come from communities that are not able to fund their work. The organizations cannot obtain loans, and their leaders don't have family wealth. They live forever in tier 3. The goal of our racial equity program is to find ways for funders to get more money to these organizations. Doing so means funders need to develop explicit and intentional programs that provide an equitable step up for an organization. That organization, in the mid-to-long term, needs to be able to compete on an equal footing with all of the other organizations qualified to receive funding. This approach would be a big change.

Today, in the formula-funding structures that are in place, those who have get more, and those who don't get less. Changing this dynamic would be a big leap for many funders. However, some funders are already engaged in this work. I could not be more proud of my board for taking on this subject. We are currently looking at a pilot project that will take a community of funders and a cohort of organizations and see how we might do this over a five-year period.

Going back to our earlier conversation. I have a story I would like to share. Our organization contracts with the New Orleans-based People's Institute for Survival and Beyond for trainings. The organization uses a structural system for undoing racism. They are rooted in the historic black-white discussion because they were formed prior to the Civil Rights movement. One of the white trainers said to me in one of the trainings, "I would rather go into penitentiaries and work with skinheads and talk to them about racism than I would to face the good, white, liberal people in this room." So, we all carry our baggage. We are well intentioned, but I think Larry Meeker's statement about how we don't know what it feels like is a great statement. Thank you for that. Too often we say, "I know what you mean." But we will never know. There are really wonderful things going on out there about which I am hopeful—I am mostly hopeful because of the young people who are very different from most of the people in this room. My children, who are both theatre kids, have an entirely different perspective on their community, how they belong to it, how they share, and how they embrace others. I have great hope, and hope has got to be a theme during this time of significant change.

**Sofia Klitzker:** If we are transitioning into the structure of a movement, we are talking about being a part of something in which values morph over time. We remain very young as a sector, and we have a long way to go before we can consider ourselves a mature field. Look at the area of gay rights and how that effort has changed over time. Think of the laws that were passed and the many campaigns and fights that were part of that long-term struggle. We need to learn that ultimate success does not depend just on grassroots or just on grassstops. Rather, success will emerge from an effort that is multi-pronged in nature. I do not want us to get so excited about any single strand that we forget that our overall arts-advocacy effort is going to be a multi-front strategy.

**Larry Meeker:** I think it would be interesting if we were all put to the challenge of creating new messages for the arts and had to abandon all that we currently have. Maybe we need to work on messaging from the artificial perspective of being brand new. What would that new message look like? What would it look like if it were geared toward arts and race? Arts and rural issues? Rural development? What would those messages look like? In Kansas City, we recently had a bi-state cultural tax that was defeated. I had suggested to the tax-district proponents that they allocate each of the 116 cities in metropolitan Kansas City \$1 million each for public art and then take the rest of the money and divide it based on population. If we did that, Kansas City would be known as the public art capital of the world. They would make movies on Kansas City and show them in Europe. But the response was, "You cannot do that kind of thing. The Nelson Atkins Museum expects its share of this money, the symphony expects its share of the money." We got into the old political "You-owe-it-to-me" pattern. They had gone through a process of asking arts organizations what they wanted, and everybody created their long list. To that I said, "You asked the wrong question. The right question is: If you cannot get any of the money, how would you like to see it spent?" And that somehow pulls us to a higher level of thinking about things because now we are thinking about how we win in the secondary market. The money goes to somebody else, but it raises the tide and floats all of our boats a little higher.

## **State Arts Agency Directors and Advocacy**

Presenters:

- Donna Collins, Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council
- Craig Watson, Director, California Arts Council

**Kimberly Howard:** I want to set the stage for this morning's conversation by sharing some statistics and also an anecdote about what is happening in my home state of Oregon. In preparation for this symposium conversation, I discovered that, in 64% of our states, the state arts agencies have a challenging relationship with the state arts advocacy organization. We talked a lot yesterday about the advocacy side of things, and so today we are going to hear the state arts agency perspective. I hope the experts at the symposium table will shed some light on this somewhat disturbing statistic.

The anecdote is this: In Oregon, we have had a challenging relationship between our cultural advocacy coalition and our state arts agency for the last few years. The advocacy coalition is unique because it is a true coalition that includes not just the arts community but advocates for Oregon Humanities, the Oregon Heritage Commission, and a number of other cultural—not strictly arts—entities. The concept of the coalition was that these diverse interests would come together and advocate for Oregon culture as a whole. Unfortunately, in this current legislative session, two legislative concepts are being floated. One was developed and proposed by the advocacy coalition, and the other is from our state arts agency. Needless to say, this is not the best practice. We have talked about collaboration a great deal; we have talked about coalition building and movement building. Michael Hillerby very nicely talked about the fact that we should not air our dirty laundry in front of the legislature. This is one of those times when we are doing that. I share that not to be scandalous or to talk behind people's backs. I share it as a context for the state arts agencies we will be hearing from today and to help close the circle of this conversation in which we continue to seek a big vision and movement toward a common goal.

**Donna Collins:** My journey into the arts started in 1998, when I became the executive director of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education. Just a few years later, I became the executive director of both Ohio Citizens for the Arts and the Ohio Citizens for the Arts Foundation. For 13 of 16 years, I ran two statewide nonprofits and a statewide foundation. You know what that means: Three boards, three sets of memberships, three sets of challenges, and three sets of successes.

Looking back, I thought about what Sue Gens said yesterday about hiring well-qualified people, and I do not know that I was well qualified to do those jobs—but I am sure happy that they hired me. In that context, I would like to share that my first engagement with the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) was as a grantee. I wrote applications that would support arts education, operations, and special projects with professional development for teachers and general support of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education. And I was very successful. If I did not have the top score in any given OAC program area for which we applied, then I was trying to figure out why I did not have the top score and how I could improve future requests to the benefit of teachers and students.

As the executive director of Ohio Citizens for the Arts (OCA), I served as the advocate for arts-and-culture organizations, artists, and audiences. As you know from some of the readings provided for this symposium, Ohio Citizens for the Arts has had a long and successful partnership that was based on the loyalty and the friendship of Wayne Lawson, the director of the Ohio Arts Council for nearly 30 years, and Bill Blair, the only legislative counsel we have had at Ohio Citizens for the Arts since its inception in 1976. Wayne and Bill were college roommates, professional arts colleagues, and champions for all things arts and culture. As I witnessed this dynamic between two strong and smart men, there were differences of opinion. There were different ways of thinking and approaches to whatever the goal was. But it was never hashed out in public. Wayne, Bill, and I would go into a room and, basically, I watched them go back and forth and, at the end, my role was typically to say, “So, I think what



I'm hearing you say is . . ." And we learned to play nice on the same playground but not in the same sandbox. I should also mention that the responsive partnership between the OAC and OCA was there before I arrived on the scene, so I do not get to take any credit for the early success.

Regarding the membership structure of Ohio Citizens for the Arts, it, too, was in place prior to my hiring. The membership-dues structure was determined by the board, which also represented large and small arts organizations as well as individuals. Four of our largest institutions in the state pay \$9,000 a year in membership dues. The other 35 large institutions pay membership dues between \$750 and around \$6,000. Mid-to-small size organizations have membership dues ranging from \$60 to \$660. Because OCA's operating dollars come from membership dues, we did not engage in major fundraising, as it would have resulted in us competing for dollars with our own members. The budget that was built on the membership-dues structure of OCA was sufficient to run a small three-person 501(c)4 organization.

The Ohio Citizens for the Arts group did not apply for grants from the Arts Council because we had a long-standing unwritten policy that we would not compete with our members for public or private dollars. Knowing that we were not in competition for funds helped us retain members and it made it easier for us to attract new members. As the first full-time executive director of OCA, my tasks included working to ensure funding for the state agency, educating the public about the importance of the arts, representing the interests of the arts, and retaining the OCA membership base. At times I needed to serve as the referee among special interests.

Succeeding in these tasks early on was pretty easy for me. Then, as I began to really learn my job, I realized there were gaps in communication and opportunities to grow the base. This was because, for a long time, we worked primarily with the grassstops, the legislature, and the very-high-profile industry leaders. I knew there was a place for the grassroots advocates because that is where I had come from, as an advocate for arts education in my children's schools and as the executive director of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education. I did not know I was an advocate when I was doing things at my children's school or in the school district or in the community. For me, it was just what you do to support. I knew there was a gap that we needed to fill. In my job at the Alliance, I was able to impact policy and work with the legislature on arts and arts education issues. At the same time, Bill Blair focused on the arts-funding work. It really was a great marriage.

Over time, balancing all of those things (two statewide organizations and a foundation) can nearly kill a person. Many of you know what it is like to run a statewide organization or a national organization; imagine leading two or three. I always felt that I needed to stay focused on the prize. What that meant was that messaging had to get clearer, and policies had to be stronger. We were touting sound bites about data that I did not think were real. I had married into those data sound bites—you know, the one about, "Wow! For goodness sakes, we bring more money into the state than the sports sector does!" I began to feel that we had better get some real data in place so that our integrity would never be in question.

I tried to convince my board that obtaining better data was a good use of funds. There was resistance to the idea of paying for the collection and analysis of data (early 2000s). So, I set out to do the collection of information myself. I went to the Ohio Arts Council offices. They were in an old historic home that was an orphanage in its day. I went up to the third floor, where the file cabinets sat. With pencil and paper, I tallied all of the final report totals. I did this so that I could talk about how many people were actually going places supported by state arts funds and what the grant-funded organizations were raising in matching funds. For the first time, I had data that I believed to be true because, when I was a grantee, I always reported the truth. I had a couple of organizations question the data I had collected and I said, “Well, it’s *your* data from *your* final reports. If you want the data to be right, you and your colleagues have to get it right and report it.”

At the same time, the [Wallace Foundation](#)’s public value work was starting. That was a great opportunity for me to further marry OCA, the Alliance, and the Arts Council together. For the longest time, OCA had been telling members, “Go count how many people were in the seats at your concert or show and tell your legislators that.” Well, that was not very effective. I said, “Look, I have the data—even if I have to tabulate it by hand every year. You tell the story.” Stories move people into action. They make the request for state tax dollars and connect as a huge return on investment. Through the influence and learnings of the Wallace-funded project, the Arts Council was training all of us to better tell our stories. It was a great opportunity for us to work together.

All of this sounds like everything is hunky dory all the time. Well, it wasn’t always. There is nothing like being taken to task by Wayne Lawson in the privacy of his office. But we presented a united front, which was truly the authentic relationship we enjoyed. Wayne was one of OCA’s biggest cheerleaders, and he asked people to become members at every opportunity. We did good things together, and arts and culture was always the priority.

My third entry into the Ohio Arts Council’s arena was when Julie Henahan retired. She had been at the agency 30 years in a variety of roles, her final being executive director. So, after much encouragement by colleagues, friends, and family, I applied for the position of executive director of the Ohio Arts Council. I wanted the board and staff to know that their advocate cared about the agency and would lead it. I was pretty sure I would never get the job, especially by Sue Gens’ definition: You have got to be trained; you have to have certain qualifications. To my surprise and delight I was the candidate they selected. As I reflected during the few months between being the director of OCA and becoming the director of the agency, one of the things that I think worked was that the executive directors reported to each other’s boards every time there was a meeting. A clear path was in place, and I had already learned so much from the executive directors that came before me.

Back in my early days at OCA, Wayne Lawson taught me about the budget process from the agency’s perspective. He pulled me into his office, he got that big notebook out, and he explained why he had to do what he had to do over time and how to work with Office of Budget Management (OBM)—and all the pitfalls. The state arts agency always drafted the initial talking

points for the budget season because it can talk about programs and who is being served. I realized that I had the core tools to draft my own agency budget through my talks with Wayne and my advocacy for the budget of the arts agency.

I also learned in other ways. When NASAA came to town, Wayne and Julie would invite me to come to the trainings. I benefitted from getting the same training that their staff received. When the agency embarked on those famous *FAM* or listening tours, I was invited to go along as one of the team and share the OCA message. The other thing Wayne did was make sure that I had contact with the staff. I reported to them several times a year. We talked about my work and what they did or did not understand. They shared information about the programming in which they were engaged.

Over time, we have had many budget successes and failures. Our budget has been like a roller coaster. I will share that, in Ohio, when a Republican governor is in place, we do much better than when a Democratic governor is in place. This statement is not about party alone, of course, it has to do with the economic environment and state's priorities. We are not at our all-time budget high. We are at about \$30 million in appropriations for this biennium. Just last week, Ohio Citizens for the Arts set its goal for the next budget session at \$34 million. That would take us over our high mark of \$32 million. I appreciate that it set an ambitious goal.

When I was at the OCA and OAAE, I had a running list of things that I would do if I were the state agency director—my wish list. We would focus on the mission of grantees and not the agency; eliminate barriers, especially for rural communities; revise the arts education program to better fit into today's educational settings; cut the grant guidelines from 157 pages to 25; stop doing outdated and irrelevant programming; increase opportunities with other state department agency heads; and fund every county. When I came to the agency, we were funding just 53 of Ohio's 88 counties. The highest mark in the agency's 50-year history was 63 counties. As of two weeks ago, we have funded all 88 counties and, in the process, funded every House of Representatives' district

In my first six months, I had this great opportunity not because I was brilliant or our team was the best there ever was in any state agency, but because there was a good, firm foundation from which to work. We held engagement tours, we created a state arts plan. In my first 60 days, we submitted the budget proposal to OBM; we submitted a full year-one NEA application; we reviewed every partnership and program that we had, eliminating everything not relevant to the mission. We reduced those grant guidelines to 25 pages (front and back).

Our board agreed to three new initiatives: Fund every county; Main Stage to Main Street, which develops relationships with our rural counties so that we could fund main-stage productions in small rural locations; and TeachArtsOhio, an initiative to improve our arts education programming by employing more artists, serving more students, and developing meaningful arts education partnerships in communities across the state.

Here are my lessons learned thus far:

- Partnerships are hard—and even harder to sustain for the people who replace you.
- Ego, when it goes unchecked, gets in the way of progress.
- Tradition and habits are hard to break.
- We have much work to do, and this will always be the case.
- I am riding on the coattails of high-powered visionary leaders in Ohio.
- Reading great books and articles is not enough to stay relevant as a leader.
- Conversation, visioning, and innovating are the only ways to move forward.
- Be nice in public, even when you are not happy with the leader or the organization. The high road is the only road.
- Take advantage of your colleagues' knowledge and stick-to-itiveness. Their lessons can save your heart.
- Use the opportunity to engage at the national level every time you can. You learn more than you give.
- Your value is greater than you think.
- Do not work like your life depends on it. Work like the citizens of your state's lives depend on it. The servant-leader mentality really makes you a better person.
- Always say “thank you.”
- Bite your tongue.
- Be generous.

In closing, I want to say that the huge mistakes are not the mistakes that will impede your work. Rather, the small, dumb mistakes are what will take folks years to forgive.

**Craig Watson:** Those of you who have heard [NEA Chair] Jane Chu speak probably know this quote, but I think it is apropos at this moment. She loves to come to a community and say, "Seen one city, you've seen exactly one city." The same is true for state arts agency work. There is not a cookie-cutter approach to such work.

We might all aspire to be Minnesota and avoid Kansas but, luckily, Governor Brownback is not being elected anywhere else in his lifetime.

California certainly has had some significant success, and I want to share some of the reasons for that. As you have already heard from Brad Erickson and Rick Stein, the California story is made up of several things. As we all know, success is usually not just one thing or one person or one moment. It is a series of moments. In our case, the components include new and motivated leadership, skills in relationship-building, the importance of being an excellent partner, and recognition of how compelling storytelling is essential to successful advocacy. These have led to California's success.

When I talk about new leadership in California, I am really talking about a series of new leaders—new leaders at the advocacy level and new leaders at the Council level. And also a governor who, even though he was in place when I arrived, was still just coming into the fullness of his new term as governor.

I left off my list of success factors this question of “luck,” but you heard both Rick Stein and Brad Erickson speak to it. I will focus on that in a minute because there are some lucky things that happened that do help tell our story. It is worth noting that, when I arrived five years ago, the strategic plan of the Council, shockingly, included “Maintain the funding of the California Arts Council” as one of the lead points in the plan. What a dismal, non-aspirational goal for the Council! After all, California was dead last in per-capita funding for its arts agency. Seeing that was a shock.

But back to this question of luck, we had two state senators who were terming out, and they were two of the most senior and powerful senators. Both of them were from the Bay Area. One, Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), headed the State Senate Budget Committee, and Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley) was positioned at the Public Safety Committee, which oversees state prisons. The luck was having these two senators in their legacy year, knowing that this was their last bite at the apple, the last opportunity to prove to their constituency back in the Bay Area that they were pro-arts. We still had to “sell” them on our effectiveness and how additional funds would be used, but we certainly were lucky to have them thinking about legacy.

In terms of relationship-building, a unique feature of my tenure at the California Arts Council (CAC) has played a role. I commute every week on Southwest Airlines from Southern California to Sacramento. I time my flights both coming and going to coincide with the same flights taken by many state legislators. So for the last several years, for an hour and five minutes every Monday and every Thursday, they are trapped. They cannot get away from me. I would say that I have put that time to good use.

The relationships I have built on those flights back and forth every week have served us well. Some of our strongest champions are among those legislators that I have made relationships with, both Democrats and Republicans.

The other thing about relationship-building is—and this is where I rightly could be questioned or criticized for pushing the envelope—I have taken personal political risks. My wife and I have hosted at least four major fundraisers in our home. Three were for legislators and one, importantly, was for our state's superintendent for public construction. In California, our highest level education leader is elected.

Tom Torlakson, who was elected state superintendent of public instruction right before I joined the CAC as director, early on committed in both his language and his actions to support arts education. He agreed to form a task force of citizens, co-led by the two agencies [The California State Department of Education and the California Arts Council] to focus on what was needed to improve the state of arts education in California. Through that process, 65 citizens drafted a new statewide blueprint for creative education. This success showed very early on that the California Arts Council—a tiny agency that had been considered irrelevant because, after all, it was 50th out of 50 states and had been in that position for almost 12 years—could change the narrative. Arts education turned out to be the first place we managed to change the story and perception regarding the CAC.

Our relationship with Tom Torlakson proved to be a powerful signal to our own arts community. Telling the arts community that, even if we did not have money—and we didn't initially—what we had was the potential to be a strong “thought leader.” We proved that we could help move an agenda that was important to everybody, no matter what area of the arts you were in. This led to a new statewide coalition, *Create California*, which is now considered a national model for collective impact. The CAC helps fund that model, though we are just one of several partners in the governance of that effort.

The other thing I would say about relationship building is that it always can be positively impacted by high-quality staff. I have a legislative affairs person who has a long history in state government. Her husband is the chief legal officer for the state's insurance commissioner, and her sister-in-law works at a high level in the budget office. Her ability to garner inside information in conjunction with our lobbyist means that we have early indications about the issues brewing at the capitol.

Another thing we did was bring powerful influencers to our side. In addition to effective relationships with our advocacy team and the lobbying firm, we have been able to tap celebrities who can open doors. A prime example would be Tim Robbins, the highly acclaimed actor and director. He can call any legislative or political scheduler and say, “Hey, I'd love to meet with Governor Brown or Speaker Perez or Speaker Rendon,” and he gets a return call very quickly. He can get those doors open. Tim Robbins has been a key advocate for our arts and corrections work. He has a long and deep history of taking his theatre work—on his own dime—to state prisons. The same is true of actress Annette Bening, who served as a Council member in years past and is deeply committed to arts education. We recently tapped Annette to be the face of our voluntary California state tax check-off program. And, by the way, we were coming up on the end of this year's campaign, and we were very close to not hitting the minimum amount needed to stay on this tax check-off form.

Annette heard that, and she called her tax advisor. It turned out she had yet to submit to the late filer. So, she just filled in the gap. She personally checked off “I want to contribute \$9,000 back to the fund,” and that got us over the hump. Annette also traveled to Sacramento and testified at a key moment in the successful drive to create teaching credentials for both theatre and dance in California public schools. Her testimony played to a packed committee room and clearly moved everyone who heard it. In relationship building, it certainly does not hurt to have influencers like Robbins and Bening opening doors.

The arts and correctional work of the CAC is based a great deal on the early history of the Arts Council. Back in the ‘70s, ‘80s, and a little bit into the ‘90s, the California Arts Council was internationally regarded for its arts and corrections work. When that work was wiped out due to budget cutbacks, it was hard to imagine how it could be brought back. But our governor said to us early on, “I can’t give you money this year, but you ought to restart that arts and corrections work.” That was a playing card that we could put down on the table with the secretary of corrections and say, “Look, the governor wants us back in this work. We have proven to be a good partner. While we are a small agency, given the opportunity, we will show you what we can do.”

So here we are, three years into what is no longer a pilot. The program was restarted with \$2.5 million and soon went to \$3.5 million. We are currently managing \$6 million, and it will go to \$8 million next year. With that comes a significant management fee due to the intensity of our work. Soon, CAC programming will be in all 34 California prisons.

As a side note, I remember early on, Phil Horn, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, asked me, “Craig, why do you want to get back into this corrections work? It’s really a heavy lift.” He was basically saying it could potentially distract us from what he saw as our core mission: Programming for arts nonprofits and artists. As I reflect back on that, the reason it was so important to the agency was that it changed the narrative. It communicated to the governor and the legislature not only that the Council was relevant but also that it was a “player,” an agency to be reckoned with. It also communicated that we know how to get along within state government and that we can bring real value to any proposition. Given the scale and difficulty that we took on willingly, it meant that the opening for other inter-agency conversations was much easier.

We have also upped our game in many other ways. We have gone from five programs to fourteen. One is a new program in arts research and another is the re-launch of a program in arts and public media, both of which we studied carefully before considering and putting forward for new funding.

We have also ramped up our communications efforts around these and other programs. The compelling nature of our programs comes out in many different ways. This year was the Council’s 40th anniversary. To celebrate, we prepared and published 40 stories that represent the breadth and depth of iconic grantees and what the Council has funded over the years. We have also created a series of videos that tell the CAC story.

We kicked off the year with an event where Governor Brown spoke and Annette Bening was our master of ceremonies. Peter Coyote, the actor who was our second chairman, also helped lead that event. This event was attended by more legislators than any other event ever put on by the state arts agency.

When we talk about success, we are not just talking about the money. Going from \$5 million to \$25 million is, of course, a really big deal. We relish the fact that we have been able to marshal more funds. However, we have also moved policy and legislation. We are in the midst of developing the new Arts and Culture Districts program. This was a completely bi-partisan effort. We also helped to pass a bill, which the governor signed, to create new credentials in theatre and dance. Another welcome development is that our budget bills now use the language coming out of the creative economy research that we have funded statewide, in partnership with OTIS College of Art and Design and the LA Economic Development Corporation. To hear that language come back in the budget bills and used in the hearings is testimony to our success.

I want to end by proposing ways that WESTAF can expand its help. Here are six suggestions:

1. Expand the partnership around rural initiatives. All of our states have significant rural populations. The fact that NASAA and the National Governors Association are working on an agreement to work on some things together for rural initiatives is a good sign—we would love to see WESTAF get involved in that effort.
2. We would love to see WESTAF come up with matching funds for WESTAF-region states to fund trainings addressing racial equity and structural racism as developed by Grantmakers in the Arts.
3. We would like to see WESTAF join with the other regionals and go to Americans for the Arts and say, “How can you fund more deeply the advocacy efforts of each state? It is not good enough to just fund the SAAN network. What more can you do to support these advocacy efforts in each of the states?”
4. Poll the state advocacy groups in the West on the software tools all of us are using for advocacy. What systems are we using, and can they be improved? Consider ways to pool resources to upgrade the technology platforms the advocacy organizations are using.
5. Deepen the programming around the Emerging Leaders of Color program. It really is a fantastic program, but it is not long enough, and it could be deeper. How do we expand that program?
6. Finally, to answer Larry Meeker’s last question, can WESTAF work with all of us on creating the most compelling and new narrative that would be helpful to all of us? Particularly as we think about changing public will, what is our new elevator pitch?



**Jay Seller:** Many of the subjects addressed in this symposium relate to Colorado. For example, we, too, have the challenge of a lack of involvement of large cultural organizations in statewide arts advocacy. The major organizations, those housed right here in downtown Denver, do not participate in state-level arts advocacy. Their contact with the community and elected officials tends to be centered on marketing themselves and not a broad vision for cultural advancement of the entire arts ecosystem of Colorado. Also, in Colorado, the conversations between our state's arts agency and our state arts advocacy group are not strong. That is the blame of both parties, and the result is that these two entities do not share common goals or a vision for what they want to accomplish in a particular year

Also, in this state, private foundations and the [Scientific and Cultural Facilities District](#) (SCFD) are essentially setting the priorities for hundreds of nonprofits working in the areas of arts. The SCFD is a one-penny tax on every \$10 spent in Denver, which last year generated \$53 million. A lot of states are jealous of that funding, but it comes with many shortcomings, one of which is a lack of motivation for advocacy and a fear among large organizations that uncontrolled (by them) advocacy will kill the golden goose.

Although the 18 creative districts in this state have injected new energy into the creative economies in rural areas, only one of them participates in arts advocacy. The districts are focused mostly on economic growth within their cities, and they ignore the political climates that are directly around them. Rural Colorado has huge challenges in the areas of equity and access to both arts education and access to cultural events in their areas. This is, of course, with the exceptions of Vail and Aspen. They are doing just fine.

There have been conversations with some of the observers about the age of arts advocates and the age of the leadership of arts agencies and organizations at the local, state, and national levels. Looking at the leadership of those organizations, we do not appear to be very inclusive of younger generations or diverse communities. I would propose that the symposium participants consider the following questions: Is succession planning taking place? Are we training today? Are we building legacies that we can share and pass on for years to come? Are we futuristic in how the arts will be viewed and supported in the future?

**Anthony Radich:** I want to underscore Donna Collins's sensitivity to serving all the people in the state in two ways. One is by covering the state and two is by chopping down the requirements to apply for funds. I have to say, in a criticism of our field, it is appalling that, after 40-some years, we have to do that. Why aren't all the state arts agencies serving every county or very close to that goal? In a certain state whose name I will not mention, not very many years ago, there were two medium cities, each with a population of approximately 100,000. The state Senate budget committee chair lived in one city, and the House budget committee chair lived in the other. Neither of these two cities received grants one year because "none of the applications received were competitive enough to be funded." How could it be possible that two cities of that size with political people who are important would not get something? Our field can't advance if it is that stupid. But we have been sometimes.

The same myopia has been observed in the area of voluminous grant guidelines. WESTAF once built a grant system for a state that actually had a 97-page application. Tell me that's access.

Craig Watson referred to luck as playing a role in the successes of the California Arts Council. I very much believe in luck. However, I also believe that things do not really totally drop from the sky unless work was done in advance to put yourself in the "occasion of luck." Here in Colorado, for example, several years ago, the lobbyist who was supported by Arts for Colorado, after working for a number of years and receiving basically nothing, found out that a close legislative ally of hers was going to head the Joint Budget Committee. Without any additional advocacy, she was able to secure \$800,000 overnight from the legislator who was also very much an art supporter. But the work leading up to that windfall on her part was done long before. You have to be ready for that kind of occasion when it occurs. Otherwise, you will be invisible and not be able to benefit from it. At this point, I would like to ask Donna Collins to talk a bit about how Ohio includes but manages its large cultural organizations in state advocacy work.

**Donna Collins:** The interesting thing about the large institutions in Ohio is that all of them are involved in advocacy. I would be less than honest if I did not just say that 50% of our state arts agency's grants budget is awarded to the largest organizations in the state—those with budgets of \$1.75 million or more. The lowest allocation the Council has made to them in recent history has been \$350,000. In the current year, they are at the \$566,000 level. Their highest ever award was \$650,000. Frankly, when these groups are promised those levels of funds, they are always a member of the advocacy organization, and their boards advocate. And none of them seeks an end run by seeking line items. They understand that they have secure funding as long as the agency has a budget. That foundational work with the large organizations helps serve grassroots arts organizations and also underwrites the operations of the Ohio Citizens for the Arts. Working together, we can leverage each other's voices to get things done.

There has, however, been pushback over the last 10 years. Some have proposed a rethinking of the 50% of the grants budget that goes to the state's largest organizations. Immediately prior to my joining the Council as executive director, qualifying budget for big organizations had been raised from \$1.5 million to \$1.75 million. Of course, what happened was that two or three large organizations dropped down into the mid-sized organizations' pot of money. We tried to use that change to leverage other dollars and encourage other funders to increase funding to those mid-sized organizations.

We have many unmet needs in the arts across the state, especially in our rural areas and in our schools. But the bottom line is to keep the money coming, even if the system may be imperfect. I am open to changing the approach, but I have not figured out how to change it in a way that keeps most of the people happy. I understand that we are never going to keep all of them happy. This year, the legislature heard our plea about the problems with arts education. We agreed that our largest institutions, which have the greatest amount of resources, increase their ability to serve through arts education, and that was helpful. I continue to personally struggle with that. I think my board is fine with where it is. We have some work to do, though.

**Craig Watson:** One of our challenges in California is that the advocacy group generates very little in membership fees, has a small budget, and has no full-time staff. The staff that we do have are contracted through the lobbying firm. I was chatting with Rick Stein over breakfast, saying, “How can we break out of that low-budget position?” A problem we have is that when the California Arts Council’s budget went down to \$5 million, that meant that none of the majors was going to get a grant of a meaningful size anytime soon. At the time, the agency leadership decided to focus on small and emerging organizations and communities of need. Actually, that approach was good for the agency. However, the downside was that the major arts organizations completely wrote off the state agency as unimportant because they did not have any financial stake in the game. Now, as the Council’s budget has come back and it can create more opportunities for thought leadership, it has an opportunity to appeal to the majors beyond just the dollars. One needs to ask: Can I do enough in that area to lure back the majors?

**Sue Gens:** I want to share some information about the way we work with our majors. An important backdrop to that process is the awarding of 30% of our grant funds to 11 regional arts organizations who re-grant those monies in their areas. That process is part of our strategy to serve rural communities. It is not perfect, but it has been effective. Of the remaining 70% that we keep to use for our own grantmaking programs, 60% goes into operating-support programs. We are the biggest funder of operating support in the state of Minnesota. This year, approximately \$14 million were allocated to 170 organizations.

The very first decision we made when the statewide legislation passed was to put more money into that operating-support program. We increased the funds for that program by about 140%. All of the organizations in that pool immediately almost doubled their grant awards. Our grants remain formula driven. However, in addition to formula-based awards, we also add a merit component. Doing so allows us to substantially increase our investments in smaller organizations. None of this is perfect, but it works, and most of the participants in the funding system remain supportive of the overall approach.

Our majors are very involved in advocacy—very involved. In part, this is because they see a tangible and substantial return. When our budget goes up, they see how their awards from us go up. And we maintain that 60% in operating support. This is a commitment we have made to them.

A few years ago, my program officer for operating support and I worked with a committee to consider ways to adjust our operating-support process and formula. The result, which was approved by the board after a series of public meetings, was the establishment of a million-dollar cap preventing any organization from receiving an operating-support grant larger than a million dollars. About three months after we passed the rule, my board members started getting phone calls, “Do you know what the staff did?” “Do you realize what this means?” The advocacy organization had convinced some of our board members that we had just done this as staff without any other consultation or input.

I pulled out the minutes from all of the meetings we had held on the subject and said, “Well, you made the motion and you seconded the motion. Then, at the board meeting, you made the motion and you seconded the motion.” They said, “Oh, well. Anyway, we have to rethink that.” So we have now repealed that. I do think that is unfortunate.

The one thing I will say is that, in operating support, we use five criteria to rate the organizations that apply. One criterion is the quality of the artistic work. The financial and management capabilities of the organization are the next two. However, I think those two are really most vital for us. We also judge them based on their public service. Finally, we judge them based on their engagement with the community. For example, how are they connecting with audiences? How are they working on diversity? How are they engaging younger audiences? We always look at those evaluations and are constantly seeking ways to improve that effort. None of this is perfect, but we in Minnesota continue to believe that keeping our majors fully engaged and happy helps us.

**Anthony Radich:** Arts advocates need to understand that the staffs of large institutions do not come to an understanding of public sector arts advocacy through their education pathways or career-advancement processes. The people who work in large institutions largely do not come from our world. Early in my career, I worked in an art museum. My peers were largely art historians. They did not take classes in politics or public policy classes. In its crudest manifestation, the group wanted to maximize the funding of the institution from the public sector in order to expand the collection and keep the major patrons of the organization—those who pay for visible parts of the enterprise—happy. With some exceptions, it is a completely different frame of reference.

We only have ourselves to blame for this situation. We need to find ways to enter into the career-advancement worlds of the staff leaders at large institutions. We need to work to ensure they become more knowledgeable of the overall arts ecosystem and the role large traditional institutions play in it. If we don't help them adopt more community-sensitive values, they will continue to be incentivised by whoever the big check writer is. For them, public sector policy structures and public sector funding sources are pretty irrelevant except as sources of money.

**Janet Brown:** My question to the Californians here is: You may be in the ideal situation to move forward because you are not trapped by the elitism of the perception of the arts that is retained by many large arts organizations. Why would you want those major institutions who carry that elitism brand with them? Why would you want them involved? If I were you, I would start looking around for other ways to fund your efforts. For example, GIA's work in Washington, DC, is primarily paid for by a few California foundations. If you need staff, perhaps you can find funders who will give you money that will support staff in the areas of public relations, public will, policy development, and other areas that are not for direct lobbying.

I am concerned about the continuing use by public funders of the formulaic funding strategy for large arts organizations, I think it is dragging us down. I am not a symphony and museum basher; however, I think that when people look at our institutions and say, "Where does your money go?," and 75% of all of the money goes to five or so institutions, you have a long-term problem. That problem is: How can you go out and give a populist message of why the arts are important to Joe Blow on the street and seek his support for a tax district and then, in all honesty and with all transparency, tell him you are delivering arts to him that he wants? Yet, when was the last time Joe Blow attended the city's symphony? Changing this dynamic is not going to be easy, especially for the folks who have been in this for 40 years. It is going to be really hard.

**Sofia Klitzker:** Regarding Janet Brown's suggestion that arts advocates seek funds from private foundations, I would say that, because of the new leadership and relationship building that are taking place, this probably is the time to go to those funders. We have not been positioned to do this in the past, but this is a new era in California, so this is now a possibility.

Regarding work with major arts organizations, in Southern California, the major arts organizations all have government-affairs staff or their own lobbyists. I need to ask: Have we ever convened those individuals to understand what their united interests are? I think of the Ivory Bill and how it affected California as a good example. For the philharmonic, the bill actually was a big deal and impacted how it could move instruments in and out of the state and country. The bill did not only affect the philharmonic, and others could be drawn into that conversation—a conversation about many other things.

I also want to ask how state arts agencies and advocacy organizations are starting to think about ways to manage through the inevitable next recession. A key theme of the conversation we have been having is that we are all stabilizing and growing. However, if we know that in the next few years, as economists are predicting, we are going to have another dip, what are we doing now to maintain a position to not just maintain relationships but to perhaps grow, even during a downturn? How are we learning from the last recession and putting those learnings to work so that we can move through the next recession with better strategies and better tools? What are we going to do so that we don't have this conversation again in five years?

**Anthony Radich:** I want to reply to what Janet Brown said about big groups dragging down advocacy and disagree with her. I agree that many of the values that the large groups are embedded in are ancient, not sensitive to current societal issues, and not very inclusive. I understand that. But when I departed as the executive director of the Missouri Arts Council, we had a \$6 billion budget that benefitted a great many groups of all sizes. I would observe that if we did not have the majors on board with us, we would probably would have had a \$2 million budget. I think we should be realistic about that.

Also, I believe that Sue Gens and Donna Collins have inherited difficult situations, and with embedded situations that are difficult, you have to do the best you can. Certainly, there is a need for a long-term education process among the major arts organizations.

Again, when I was at the Missouri Arts Council, I, fortunately, inherited a good relationship with the majors and worked to make it into a great relationship. A cornerstone of that relationship was the interest of the large arts organizations in the advancement of culture across the state. I understand that building relationships with the majors can be very challenging. However, I believe it can be done. So I don't want to discard them quite so quickly.

**Janet Brown:** First of all, what I am not arguing about is the majors' values. I do not think that is where we are. I also think that when you were in Missouri, it was a whole different time. We are talking about a period where equity is important, where we actually tried to have a 99%-1% revolt—and that didn't quite happen. But it could. I think the times are different, and so is the perception of what these organizations are, what power they have.

What I'm thinking about is if they are paying for you to advocate, that's a different story than if you are on your own advocating for them—that is where you want to be. You want to be empowered as an advocate to say to all of those legislators, "We are in your district. We are doing X, Y, and Z. We're not paid for by X, Y, and Z." That is what I'm talking about.

**Anthony Radich:** Times are different, but the same issues were there. I'll give you an example. When I was at the Missouri Arts Council, we wanted to find \$400,000 for an African American initiative in rural Missouri in the '90s. Not easy. Who was on board then? All the majors. And they helped us. And we had a lot of criticism from downright racist legislators. I think the issues are the same, but the cast of characters is different. That said, I do not disagree that it is unforgivable that, these days, the big guys often don't have a clue.

**Matthew Wilson:** Craig, when you talked about how you [the California Arts Council] were finally relevant, finally a player, I find this interesting as an arts agency because, when I talked yesterday about boxes and silos, in Massachusetts, it starts from the top with our arts agency being in a silo off in state government. They are not under the administration; they are a quasi-government agency. So they are not under the governor, and they are off to the side. They like that because they have their independence, yet, partially because of that, they are not an integral player in the administration.

In Boston, there is a cabinet-level position for the arts, and the head of that agency sits at the table with the police chief and the fire chief and the redevelopment folks. So she is in the mix. Our arts-agency leader rarely interacts with the governor.

A key question for me is where the arts agencies fit in government. For me, it is so important for them to be at the table. What is the best structure to do that? In Massachusetts, the arts are off to the side in the administration—a nice little add-on but not integral to the working of the administration.

**Richard Stein:** The idea that we would exclude anyone from the arts community from being part of our community, I think, is just ridiculous.

To not be representing their concerns along with the concerns of the other parts of the arts community is something that would violate our mission as an arts-advocacy organization.

We have the benefit, however, of a couple of things. First of all, for at least 15 years, the James Irvine Foundation has engaged in significant initiatives with major arts institutions in California. The foundation has shared research with them and urged them to become less elitist. Most of them have wholeheartedly embraced that process and have initiated some extraordinary programs that help dispel accusations of elitism that are made against them.

Regarding the relationship between the state arts agency and the state arts advocacy organization, how to make that relationship work is very important to reflect on. Over the years, we certainly have had our issues. Early on, many of us were new and working together for the first time. In those days, the issue was one of trying to develop and build trust between the two organizations. Part of it was that feeling that, “No, I’m responsible for this,” “No, I’m responsible for that,” “No, I have the relationship with this person,” “No, I have the relationship,” or “This elected official just said this about you.” Also, we have some elected officials among our biggest champions who hate each other’s guts. So, navigating those waters in tandem is a very challenging situation.

One of the things that bolstered our efforts—and this predates any of us who are involved today—was one of the bulwark programs of the California Arts Council that was established many years ago, the state-local partnership. That program places Arts Council funding in nearly every county of the state’s local arts agency (either a government arts commission or a nonprofit arts council). I think it reaches 54 of California’s 58 counties. When a state-local partner is established, that partner is largely guaranteed to receive a grant at almost exactly the same base level, regardless of the county’s population. With those funds, the partners perform the service of being the eyes and ears of the state arts agency in those counties, and they also have funds to originate their own programming.

We now have a very strong network of those state-local partners. One result is that California Arts Advocates now has a number of those representatives on the board, and those individuals have been at the forefront of our advocacy efforts. Every year for the past several years, they have led the effort to get letters out to members of the state legislature regarding an array of issues arts advocates are seeking to address. That group of state-local partners is heavily rural oriented. However, the group also includes all the major cities and is much more diverse in that respect. I think that relating in part to the state arts agency through that program has been a strength in terms of building and sustaining our interorganizational relationship.

That being said, we hear from the field when they don’t agree with what the state arts agency has done. For example, Craig Watson noted the ability of the Council to expand its programs to 13 or so. But there are those who say, “Why do we have so many programs? We have barely any money to work with as it is. Aren’t we spreading the money too thin?” We, as the arts-advocacy group, do get involved in those conversations with the state arts agency. We are talking about it all the time. We agree to disagree on things.

The arts advocates are also mindful of the fact that, until there is a lot more money, some of the desirable work of the agency, such as restoring the organizational support program for large-budget organizations, is not going to happen. The political reality is that a lot of the new programs of the Council are targeting the underserved and are targeting veterans. These are worthy areas of focus; however, they are also designed in part to satisfy the specific interests of the legislators who are our champions. The state-advocacy organization-state arts agency relationship requires a lot of give and take.

**Pam Breaux:** State arts agencies are doing some good work in the equity realm. Some of them are doing some great work. NASAA has renewed its commitment and work in that area in order to further strengthen all of the state arts agencies and help them build strong foundations that support more equitable systems of support for the arts. In the new fiscal year, we at NASAA will engage in some rigorous mapping work that is designed to overlay state arts agencies' grant making on top of state demographics. We want to make that reality tangible because these are the kinds of tools that state arts agencies can use with their councils to push the systems toward further equitability. The entire equity conversation is taken quite seriously by the state arts agencies and is very important to them and their long-term success.

**Catherine "Rusty" Foley:** I want to comment on what Richard Stein was saying. I am interested in the role your advocacy organization has played in the development of programs at the state arts agency. I know that in Minnesota and California, while the struggles are real, you folks have an advantage that a lot of us do not have in that you have a political environment that supports investment in a vibrant arts and cultural community and views such investment as positive. That is not an overlay we have in Arizona. As a result, we are, as advocacy organizations, betwixt and between because we are dealing with a political environment that is not at all welcoming.

We in the advocacy network are dealing with state arts agencies. We know that 64% of the state arts advocacy organizations have a rocky relationship with their state arts agencies. We are all working on behalf of these state agencies. I am, however, interested in the degree to which the advocacy organizations are substantively involved in the development of new agency programs.

We are an advocacy organization whose founders modeled the effort very much after Ohio's advocacy organization. A key part of that model is publicly being on the same page as the state arts agency. As wonderful as the work is that is going on in so many parts of Arizona, our group sometimes feels like order takers. We are not consulted on what the budget ask is, we are not consulted regarding program development, but we are expected to go out and sell a product. I want to do that; however, there are political realities that are sometimes thrown up by the nature of the political process, and the degree to which the collaborative is open and embracing can make a difference in the outcome of a political situation. I grew up in a corporate organization where grassroots and community support were very important.



I am interested in how other arts-advocacy groups approach attaining consensus and the most effective ways to work toward consensus with the state arts agency and its client base.

**Brad Erickson:** I want to thank Janet Brown for commenting on the opportunity we have in California because our advocacy organization is not beholden to the major arts organizations in the state. On the other hand, two or three years ago, when we had to get Senator Loni Hancock on board, I called up the managing director of one of the majors, and we went together to her office. They were very good friends, and she was a subscriber of this organization. The connection with the major arts organization was not the only reason Senator Hancock came on board so strongly, but it was one of them. As we were walking over there, the managing director asked me, “So, does this mean we're going to get our grant again?” I just said, “Well, I don't run the Arts Council, but it will mean that there's more money.”

Our advocacy organization is trying to find that balance on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In California, we must deal with those issues. The California Arts Advocates (CAA) were on the wrong side of that issue when the California Arts Council was cut 13 years ago. At that time, long before my and Rick Stein's time, the California Arts Advocates organization was viewed as not being diverse or inclusive. I believe that state of affairs greatly limited the work of the Advocates to save the funding. I believe we are at a very interesting moment—a moment during which we will make tremendous progress in the infusion of the arts with values and people representing diversity and equity.

In order to attract large arts organizations to our work, we probably need to hold out the possibility of them acquiring significant funds from the state. But perhaps we need to expand our thinking about how to generate those monies. Maybe there are other models and programs that might be interesting to the large-budget organizations that would also advance our shared goals and a vision that we can work on together.

We are at an interesting reset moment. We are free from being beholden to almost anybody, so, in California, this is a great moment for us to think about how we organize ourselves to succeed in the future.

**Craig Watson:** I love Sofia Klatzker's point. I think we should bring the lobbyists together. It's not just the big arts organizations; it's the city lobbyists and others whom we need to attract to our cause. That is a huge resource. Just think about all the lobbying power that San Francisco alone can bring to bear.

We need to be working on our future money strategy right now. My strategy is to get Gavin Newsom elected governor after Governor Brown. When I met him, he bragged about doubling down on the arts when he was mayor of San Francisco during the last recession. He claims that, by doing so, more economic progress was made.

In California, we have a cultural cabinet. So in addition to us being a direct-report to the governor, I get together on a monthly basis with the heads of the state library, state parks, state archives, and the state museum. It is a really interesting group, and working in that group has been a way to expand the influence of the arts across state government.

## Additional Considerations

**Larry Meeker:** We are at a point in the symposium at which we are open for additional comments and discussion. I would actually like to begin this final discussion segment with a comment that emanated from something Donna Collins said about the need for more accurate data. This is a subject that has come up on several occasions throughout this symposium. In the arts, we measure things by butts in seats, whether you are looking at it compared to sports or something else. While these are not perfect comparisons, they are a kind of measure. They may be appropriate measures of how well you are serving your local community; however, when you take that kind of measure to a different level and have a conversation, for example, about the arts and how important they are to the local community, it needs to be couched in terms other than butts in seats. It is about whose butts are in the seats.

A good example of that is NASCAR. The NASCAR tracks in any major community have greater economic impact on those communities than baseball, football, soccer, hockey, or any other game. Does anybody know why? It's not the *number* of people. Lots of people attend baseball games, basketball games, and all that. It is that, for the most part, NASCAR tickets are owned by out-of-town people who come to town to buy food, spend in stores, etc. Therein lies that impact. I think this relates to the research that indicates that arts tourists spend more than the average tourist. It depends on what level we begin to craft our message.

I spoke with Craig Watson about prisons and how we fully document the improvements arts programs make in the prison population. As we form partnerships with other organizations, trying to help them achieve their goals through the arts, we will be focused more heavily on research to measure the outcomes.

I would like to give each participant around this table three minutes to sum up what has gone on. What do you want to talk about?

**John White:** California appears to have an interesting opportunity. Rather than re-engaging with the major arts organizations that are in a trend of decline with consumers using their services, there is perhaps a role for the state arts agency to use its leadership in issues of racial equity and service to underserved communities—essentially appealing to the demographics that the majors are missing out on. Ultimately, the arts agency could bring the large groups to the table by telling them the agency has something they need, which is meaningful connections with a new generation of audiences. That seems like a way to bring them to the table, to express your values, and to not beholden by theirs.

**Craig Watson:** John, that is a really interesting point. But let me name some of the major institutions in California, and you tell me whether you think they would think we are more sophisticated than they are on this question. The Los Angeles Philharmonic, led by Gustavo Dudamel, who has opened up its audience in some part due to the choice of Dudamel. The Los Angeles County Art Museum would argue that it is the largest budgeted arts organization in California and that it is sophisticated in this area on many levels. So the question is: Can we enter into a conversation at the right level in a way that brings something that they would not only value but learn from? We have to face the fact that these are major institutions with highly sophisticated leadership. But at the mid-level, as we look for common cause within the legislative government affairs, public relations, and community relations, there is an opportunity to open that conversation with the large institutions and, kind of under the radar, develop trust and some common notion of why we should work together. So, I think that is a very open question and a really good way to open that point.

**Sue Gens:** I do not want to belabor the majors question, but I do have a thought about it, starting with something that Matt Wilson said yesterday that some advocacy groups are organized along the lines of a chamber of commerce model. This is certainly what is happening in Minnesota—protecting the interest of their members versus the movement model. What does the public want? What do the residents of the state want? To the extent that the advocacy organization can help to identify what the public wants from the arts, they can feed success. The advocacy organization and the state arts agency together might bring that information to the larger institutions. This is what the potential audience wants, expects, and needs from you. And it could allow us to work together. I don't know if we'll ever get to where you want us to be, but how do we bring about the change in those institutions that we need to bring about in our own institutions? We cannot cast the first stone until we solve our own problems. It would be great to have a partnership together, to say we all are responsive to the public—to what they want and need. How do we work at that at every level? Matt Wilson, Rusty Foley and Sofia Klatzker, and all of you who are very active in the AFTA network can bring this message into your work. I think you can be messengers there and we—Donna Collins, Craig Watson, and I—can be messengers in our network about how we bring the public interest back into our work.

**Larry Meeker:** Other comments or questions from the observers?

**Rachel Cain:** Hi. My name is Rachel Cain. I work at WESTAF. Ten years ago, I started a thesis project that focused on the (then) Colorado Council on the Arts. After ten years at WESTAF, I am here at this symposium listening to much of the same conversation. The group here is very similar to the group that was around ten years ago: Homogenous, very white, and—if I may be so bold—older than me. When we try to talk about innovation, it is important to understand that you get the perspectives of the people that you invite to the conversation. So if you do not bring in young people to help you innovate, you are going to keep chasing your tail about what the problems are and how you can and cannot fix them. So I would challenge WESTAF to bring the young leaders of color to talk about inequity, to talk about privilege, to talk about access, and to help you re-envision what it means to truly integrate the arts into everything.

Instead of isolating the arts into a state agency that has to continuously make the case for itself and connect itself to corrections, education, poverty—all the things that we know but that we have separated ourselves from.

My second challenge would be to have the next symposium include younger voices and to actually focus on what the country would look like if there was no arts infrastructure. What if the NEA did not exist? What if NASAA was not around? What if the state agencies were dismantled by the people who created them? What would this conversation actually sound like?

**Larry Meeker:** An excellent challenge. Responses or comments?

**Craig Watson:** I am getting pretty close to leaving my position as director of the California Arts Council. When I came to the Council five years ago, my staff's age was, on average, the highest age of any state agency. I had inherited a legacy staff that, because the agency had shrunk over time, those who survived the reduction process mandated by civil service were older because they had worked at the agency longer. Perhaps it is good news that almost all of them have since retired and are now gone. Currently, most of my staff are Millennials. It makes us better, and the future is bright for California. The good news is that the older agency employees across the country are departing employment, and the employees will very soon be mostly young people. There is a generational shift that is definitely happening.

**Erin Graham:** Listening to this conversation, what has been present in my mind is that so much of it has been about strategy and tactics and not really about a vision of transformation for the future. If we are putting forth a bold vision for transformational change and imagining how the world will look different and how the arts will contribute to that, part of that vision is related to issues of equity, but parts of it are a lot of other things. As we heard from Pam Breaux, trust in government is at an all-time low. We also heard that many people do not feel like they are reflected in our agencies. So how do we get the right people together to come up with a vision for all these strategies and tactics that we have been talking about, which are really great ideas and can really help advance us much farther in the future?

I am thinking about a vision that is on the magnitude of 20 years from now. We are talking about what we have inherited, which for many of us was 20 years ago. So what does the future look like 20 years from now? After we imagine it, we need to know how we are setting milestones to gauge our success along the way. We need to be able to say, "In five years, we are going to do this" and "In 10 years, we are going to do this."

The National Science Foundation (NSF) regularly sends out "Dear Colleague" letters. I don't know if any of you read them. I find them to be fascinating in terms of laying out how the federal government looks at long-term problem solving. I looked one up because I was thinking about it last night. The NSF released a "Dear Colleague" letter around changemakers. The letter indicated that, nationally, cities and communities face deep, interlocking physical, social, behavioral, economic, and infrastructural challenges, and the solutions will require ingenuity across all domains, including science.

In my mind, I am thinking, “Why does that not also include the arts?” There will be multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary challenges that must have multidisciplinary solutions. So if that is our future and they are asking for people in the science world to step forward with innovative ideas and they are willing to fund that, where is that vision for our communities? I think that we have a great opening in this conversation.

What I have been excited to hear is that a number of the arts-advocacy organizations are thinking more broadly as if maybe they do not just exist to advocate for arts. They are reaching out to advocate for a broader range of social issues. I know the things we are trying to address here, but I think if we are really going to put a stake out there, we should be bold, take the risk, and put a stake out there that is 20 years from now. Otherwise, I do not see a path for success. Every time our administrations change, every time we change, every time our relationships change, those events can pull us off track. But if we have a long-term and ambitious goal out there, then even as some core elements change and critical people change and retire, we can know that we are tracking toward something that is much bigger than any of us as individuals or our institutions.

**Dinah Zeiger:** I have been around WESTAF for 18 years. I, like Rachel Cain, have heard this conversation before. I want to follow up on what Erin Graham just said about intentionally inviting people. One of the most profound things I have heard these last few days was Sofia Klatzker talking about the model that she uses to invite people to her training class from all of the constituencies that make up her huge environment. And it is not confined to people who are already speaking. What we are talking about is parents, it is people who live in the community, it is people who are retired. And I think if you really want to know what people are going to think 20 years from now, it is not just the people who fall into our world of art makers and arts administrators. It is just people. So we need to be much more inclusive about how we define who we speak to and who we need to speak to us.

My community looks different from my neighbor’s. My neighbor is 26 years old and has a four-year-old child. Her world is an entirely different world. Yet, she wants to know about the arts; she wants to be a part of it. She wants her child to grow up in an environment that speaks to the 21st century. I want to just reinforce what Erin Graham and Rachel Cain suggested: We need to change the mix of people who get to participate in this type of discussion. We just do. It is hard to let go sometimes.

**Brad Erickson:** Perhaps we even want to design a vision that goes beyond 20 years. I am thinking about the world of theatre, which I come from. There was a vision 50 years ago to create a regional nonprofit theatre network. At the time, the theatre community thought it would be really awesome if we could establish a couple dozen professional theaters in cities across the country. Now, there are literally hundreds and hundreds of professional theaters across the country and thousands more nonprofit, semi-professional companies. So the vision sort of exploded. With that came a lot of other issues and problems and other things.

But, certainly, the idea that theatre only lives in one city in America has been blown up. I wonder: If we allow ourselves to dream really big—maybe even as long as a half century out—what would that vision be?

**Kimberly Howard:** I am going to jump in here and again borrow from our STEM partners and suggest that WESTAF do some sort of—to use the words of our STEM community—*clean tech challenge* with a certain age group within our community. Maybe it is WESTAF’s Emerging Leaders of Color, the cohorts we have developed through that effort. Then maybe some others who could compete to be their own cohort. Instead of it being a *clean tech challenge*, it might be a *livable city challenge* or *livable communities challenge*. A lot of the colleges and universities in the metro area of Oregon are also doing what they call *sustainable neighborhood challenges*. They are using design thinking that is out of Stanford to bring these cohorts together, to form these big ideas. The example that Rachel Cain gave of asking the people who will actually be the leaders 20 years from now what they envision—a challenge like that might be great. Maybe we cannot see it sitting at this table, but they might be able to see it. Also, we should include parents who have young children right now, like I do, or children who have just been born. I am trying to think about what this world is going to look like when my children, my boys, are 18, 19, 20 years old. And that is what Erin Graham was talking about. But I really like the idea of a *livable cities challenge* and having the arts be the center of that, the tool by which we create these livable cities.

**Anthony Radich:** The symposium participants have done a good job of illustrating the fact that the major visions that were imagined for the public sector arts field in the past have now concluded. We have talked about AFTA and where it is at today and its limited effectiveness in the area of advocacy. We have talked about NASAA and its limited vision regarding the reinvention of state arts agencies. We have talked about state art agencies and the fact that, collectively, they have not advanced in terms of appropriations in more than 20 years. And now we are talking about the desperate need for a new and more ambitious vision for the field. In many ways, those of us around this table are like pallbearers at the funerals of a series of now-passed-away visions. Around this table, we have some of the most creative people in our region.

Yes, different people need to be included in this conversation. That is true. But I think our field is pretty unable to recognize that “hello! The house is on fire!” Let us either put out the fire or build a new house. Our field has been reluctant to examine its effectiveness and the limited impact of its initiatives for a very long time. There is a value to this conversation in terms of recognizing where we are and what we really need to do. I think, yes, we need different people, different voices, different resources in that next conversation. Hopefully, this can be done. Maybe that conversation can help project the public arts funding field away from the unproductive cycles into which it has elected to be trapped.

**Brian J. Carter:** I want to make a comment about the voices around the table. I am somewhat young, I'm 37. I just look older. I think, when talking about the end of an era or these transitions or the arts field and leadership aging out and this huge shift that is coming, we need to understand that these transitions are slow. They are long in evolving and this group will go from predominantly white to predominantly minority at a certain point. It is a slow evolution. I guess I feel that, as far as voices around the table, if Craig Watson has a staff that is more diverse or is younger, it is an *and* not an *or* because there is a game we as arts leaders have to play, a political game. I think, like Anthony Radich, I'm a realist. There are certain relationships that exist that need certain people at the table, and these people right here have certain relationships at the state level that are valuable and need to be passed on during this upcoming transition of leadership.

To change what arts leadership looks like, I think you have to go through periods of transition—deliberate transition where there is a pairing of the new and the existing. It is a mentorship situation. It is somebody sitting next you learning the political game who perhaps looks different, comes from a different generation, or is a different color, a different ethnicity. So I think that is the potential power WESTAF has in these convenings: The transition, the intentional transition of power. I think one way you do that—maybe I am wrong—relates to the statistics that were presented earlier about alliances or advocacy organizations. I do not know if race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gender were involved in the gathering of those data. So that is one avenue—being informed about current leadership demographics. I would make the assumption that most state alliances and advocacy organizations are predominantly white. Though, I think the [New York arts staffing diversity survey model](#) has really shown us the power of data to start creating a transformation when it comes to staff diversity. I think you first have to name the issue, name the problem, then work together. I do not mean to sound Pollyanna-ish, I would just like to see the next generation of diverse leaders sitting next to the folks around the table who have been doing this for 30 years because I know, as somebody who works to change every organization I work for, I still have so much to learn from some of these older white leaders who have been in this system for so long. It is the truth. It is a particular system, and I cannot change that system in a day. I plan to move the needle during my 40 years of upcoming service in the arts field. However, we need to do that together.

**Michael Hillerby:** I have always wondered if the original architects of the NEA and the state agencies were to listen to this now, to look at the amount of money and effort we spend talking about “could we just get to a dollar per capita in funding?,” if they ever would have built what was built. If we had Rachel Cain and a bunch of other young, new voices with no history come and sit down and say, “Let us design a model to provide some funding,” would they ever pick government to do it? Rachel just said no. I am reminded of Eric Hayashi, a former WESTAF trustee from California, talking about different ways to make a living in the arts. His students were leaving film school with no interest in the nonprofit world. They didn't care. They were not interested in what the model was. They wanted to know, “Where can I go and do my work?,” and they were finding the 501(C)3 model and the government-funding model too complicated. It was easier to go to Kickstarter, to go to friends, or to do something else. I think there is something to be learned from that—from stepping back and asking that bigger question.

I know it is not the original agenda for this meeting, but still, would we have created this system that we have ended up with?

**Kimberly Howard:** We also should remember that, thanks to the musical *Hamilton*, we've been reminded that the founding fathers were all under 30.

**Janet Brown:** That is because life expectancy was 40.

**Larry Meeker:** That is true. They were old even though they were 30.

## Summary and Final Comments

**Larry Meeker:** I now want to go around the table and ask the participants to do two things. One is, in short form, a haiku poem form would be great, to highlight a take-away—or maybe two—that you have. The second thing is, I would like to have you suggest where we go from here with this conversation.

**Michael Hillerby:** Where we head from here, well we [WESTAF] can create a white paper on the subject, and that is a place to start. The “what” I am not entirely clear on except that we start to do something different. I wrote down here that, in my mind, the tension between the advocacy organizations and the state agencies needs to be managed in a way that is creative and healthy. Also, we need to avoid thinking that there are one-size-fits-all models because there are places like Ohio and Minnesota that are in a very different place from our western states.

**Sue Gens:** I am going to share a quote that I have hanging just above my desk. I am not a militarist, but the quote is from General Eric Shinseki, “If you don't like change, you'll like irrelevance even less.” One of the take-aways for me is how Donna Collins, Craig Watson, Gay Cookson, John White, Pam Breaux, and I can take all of this work back to NASAA, and it will inform what we are doing there. I think we have to be realists. Public funders are a very small piece of the arts infrastructure. In most cases, public funding does not make up the majority of the money expended on the arts. So the question is: How do we best use our resources that have to be accountable to the public? We have a vision statement at the Arts Board that says, “The arts are essential for a vibrant society.” There cannot be a vibrant society without the arts as a motivator putting in play the innovation, imagination, and creative problem solving that we have to make the best life possible for all citizens. So how do we re-dedicate ourselves to being focused on our place of residence, on our communities, and not so much on making our majors happy or certain artists happy? How do we take that work back to NASAA, and how do all of you take that work back to the umbrella organizations that you are involved in so that we can be more accountable and more relevant to the citizens who ultimately pay for what we are doing?



**John White:** I think my take-aways are going to be thinking about this concept of relevance, and it seems like there is a flipside to that coin that is not rosy. I cannot quite put my finger on it, but I will be thinking about that. I also want to say that I feel like there is a lot of doom and gloom in this room, and there is also a lot of real strength. It almost seems like that strength is downplayed. I understand budgets are tight and that an arts advocate's life is walking uphill, but I do think that presenting your strengths is the best sales tool. That is how you get people on your side. The difficulties of your life and the little money your organizations have—all of those things are important, and need to be communicated. But what you bring to the table is more important. Your strengths are more important, especially to a politician and the people whose minds you are trying to change and whom you are trying to educate about the importance of the arts in our communities. I also think that, as art-focused people, we have the tendency to be empathetic, and so we do not want to overplay our strengths. We do not want to make other people feel bad. Do not do that.

**Richard Stein:** My take-away is that I feel reinvigorated to continue the pursuit of the resources we need to advance our goals. While some of us have different interpretations of what those ultimate goals are, we all certainly aspire to the greatest degree of inclusivity and equity. Certainly, all of us realize that we have not achieved that yet. I think part of the reason for that is a matter of the bottom-line resources we came to talk about. The goals we want to accomplish cannot be accomplished without having more resources. When we look at the other kinds of endeavors in which the government invests money, we are just barely learning how to better tell our stories successfully. However, I think we have some momentum going for us. I really look forward to the years ahead in terms of the kinds of accomplishments we can make.

**Craig Watson:** To adapt a quote of a famous Californian, "The rumors of our demise have been greatly exaggerated." We are going to be around for a while with this model or a new one. I prefer the new model, and I think, Erin, to your point, we need to focus on the creation of a new model. I think Sofia Klatzker's point about looking ahead and really being serious about what is next is also important to our work in part because of a cyclical reality that our economy always faces. What I would love to find a way to do is, in California's case, continue to push the risk envelope. Those two things do not belong in the same sentence, right? Government and risk.

I recently attended a series of Southern California grantmakers workshops, including a breakout session on social entrepreneurship. I think what many of our youngest, most articulate, and thoughtful leaders are thinking about is the intersection of their passions and their social entrepreneurship. How do the arts play in that space? How do we invest in folks who do not look at the nonprofit world as an ideal location for their effort but who can be partnered with us? And in the social entrepreneurship world, how can we earn something tangible through the value added—or what some call *social impact bonds*? And what about funding for-profit organizations, funding small entrepreneurs in a way that we normally do not think of as being able to fund? If we think of ourselves as more economic development focused, are there new ways to think of our future?

**Janet Brown:** I want to begin talking about the creation of state arts-advocacy organizations in every state. I totally agree with Matt Wilson that every state is different, and every state defines itself somewhat differently. When considering what is the best thing to do, there are many models and many visions, so we have to be careful not to think of only one vision—there are many visions. The success of state advocacy organizations is absolutely dependent upon the support of the state arts agency. That does not necessarily mean dollars, but it does mean policy engagement, it does mean joint planning, and it does mean being at the table when the advocacy organization is created. The advocacy organizations that are not at the table with their state arts agency will have a very short life.

So models are important. Money and staff are important. Staff is always important, always. That goes into leadership. And there needs to be national leadership to make a movement out of the efforts of the state advocacy organizations. Then we have to define what we are advocating for, so I get a little bit nervous. I have thought a lot about that these days.

These days, we talk about the work at Grantmakers in the Arts for artists and arts organizations. We talk about the arts, and most of the rest of the world does not know what we are talking about. I think we are talking about artists—from professional artists to the guy and gal who sing in the shower—we all have those creative abilities. We are all artists, and every community is better with artists in it. So we need to talk more about artists and less about organizations because institutions are never true or faithful. Institutions will always betray you. People will not. Artists will not. Let us define ourselves in terms of advocating for artists and arts organizations to make our lives better.

**Brad Erickson:** Okay. So I have a haiku because, you know, you asked for one. I do what I am told:

Meteorite falls  
Ignites fire but embers cool  
New winds revive flames

That image Anthony Radich presented to us earlier about arts agencies being like meteorites that fall into state government has really stuck with me. What is really powerful to me about that is that state agencies are not private foundations and yet, for many years, a great number of the arts agencies functioned as if they were private foundations. Private foundations are awesome; thank God for them. One could argue that imitating private-foundation behavior within state government was not a bad thing to do. However, a new era is beginning, and we need to work to better define how we create value for the larger government. I think that is the work that is in front of us. We as advocates now must take that message back to the field, back to the public, and then to the elected. We need to emphasize that the purpose of the state arts agency is to serve the people of our states.

**Donna Collins:** On my first day at work at the Ohio Arts Council, I started thinking about succession, so a Millennial was appointed to be our deputy. The next four hires were all under the age of 30. There was some diversity there—not enough—but it was a good start. I believe I shared in my perspective that we [the Ohio Arts Council] have ridden a long way on former longtime Ohio Arts Council executive director Wayne Lawson’s coattails of great work, innovative work, and visionary work for a long time. So thank you for helping us know who we could be and providing us with some new visions so we can be better than we are today.

Regarding the 50% of the Ohio Arts Council’s budget that is set aside as operating support for the state’s largest institutions, while I am not always happy about that, I think about the 40% of NEA funds set aside for the states and regions. If that set-aside percentage were to shrink to, say, 20%, we would revolt. The advocates would be up in arms, the state agencies would be up in arms; maybe a couple of people would not be. So it is difficult to argue both sides of the fence. Finally, I love what Sue Gens said. We should be continuing this conversation. We have the opportunity to do that in our own networks and then moving that to an actionable agenda.

**Catherine “Rusty” Foley:** I think this conversation has reinforced the fact that identifying shared interests, even among our own sector, is a difficult task. Advocacy landscapes are really quite complex. Also, we share this issue of the dominance of major arts organizations. It is a challenge, but it is physics. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. It is political, perhaps, but I think I would just say that our challenge in getting to a new vision has clearly been hung up in this discussion. But our focus on the challenges we have with our strategies and our tactics is really an indication that the existing models we work with and some of the commonly held assumptions we have about our roles really are impeding our work going forward.

One big question I would leave on the table here that I do not believe we completely answered is: Who are we are serving in this work that we do? Traditionally, I hear a lot of talk about the field from agency people, “Is it the field we are serving?” I mean, I am not sure that any foundation or government agency gives a grant to a social service agency to promote the objectives of the social service agency. I think it is their clientele and their customers—the citizens—whom they serve. I think that is something we are going to have to keep working on. I think we laid some nice ground work. I look forward to the follow-up.

**Sofia Klitzker:** Thank you so much for having me, a local agency voice, at the table. I am grateful to be a part of this conversation. I believe the reason we advocate is to create policy change. There is a government element that unites our efforts; we also work to create change at the community level. That happens in myriad ways, and just having our finger on the pulse of how that is happening now and anticipating what that looks like in the future is critical to our success. But our work is also about demanding services and opportunities, and that can happen in myriad ways. That is part of policy, but it is also part of building the local community. It is also about promoting the best of ourselves and our neighbors and exploring and reflecting on the hardest social justice issues that we face. I think we need to remember that arts advocacy is not just seeking policy change, but it is also these other things, too.

**Brian J. Carter:** I have an ethical concern related to arts advocacy as it has been discussed in this forum. Today, I have heard about the benefits of alignment of the arts and arts advocacy with existing government programs. I have a concern about aligning with government departments or initiatives that are propping up existing systems of racism and/or oppression. I believe the arts can be transformative and that they can often best be used to tear down systems of oppression. So I have concerns about the arts intersecting with societal issues like incarceration or poverty, especially if they do so through existing systems and so far downstream. By doing so, there is a danger of propping up systems of oppression that disproportionately impact certain communities. So we need to keep that in mind when we talk about alignment with existing government systems.

I will conclude with a comment about the arts-advocacy realm. I feel like the curtain has been pulled back on this important work during my three days here. My experience, especially in the academic realm, was not around policy and was not around advocacy. However, I can name you 15-20 museum-studies programs around the country and nonprofit leadership programs that I think WESTAF, or perhaps this group, has got to help center this issue of arts advocacy. I would suggest the conversation about advocacy and policy be delivered to arts leaders at a younger age. That way, there would be more and different kinds of people around the table who would understand the importance of these issues. At the moment, this is not something that is taught and highlighted as important in a young arts leader's career.

**Matthew Wilson:**

Arts advocacy

Creating powerful movements

Building vibrancy

That is my haiku. It has been interesting for me to hear the term *movement* being talked about a lot over the past three days. It is my background—working with movements—and it is exciting to think about how we can build a movement here. It is obviously going to take a lot more discussion. There are two key parts that you need to build a good movement: One is a good narrative, and the second is the infrastructure to actually tell that narrative. So those are the two tasks at which we should be looking.

When we talk about narratives, we talk about three stories we need to tell: The story of self, the story of us, and the story of now. I think we do a pretty good job telling the story of self. We are good at talking about ourselves and self-interests. We need to work on is the story of us. What is our broader interest in the larger community? We need to be able to create that narrative. The story of now is what we want. What is our platform actually asking for? So, for me, those are great discussions to have. The second is structure. I am just a firm believer in the need to increase capacity to do this work. So how do we create and build those models and support them? To me, it is exciting. We have potentially 50 laboratories to try to figure this out. We have 50 different states with 50 different identities. I think it would be great to focus on a few of them and figure it out and focus energy and resources and go. We can actually do this.

**Larry Meeker:** Thank you, Matt. I would like to invite anyone from the audience out there who would like to make a brief comment.

**Elisabeth Dorman:** I want to express my thanks for being able to be in the room and to hear this conversation. It is a recent transition, but the [State Arts Action Network](#) (SAAN) is officially under my helm. I appreciate the thoughts and the knowledge and the past expertise being shared, which I can take back and apply to my work during a period of change at our office. I think there are some really cool things happening in policy. There is an interesting policy window opening through the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#). Also, the state policy pilot program that Matt Wilson and Rusty Foley are a part of is advancing and will be a great contributor to the advancement of arts advocacy. I believe we all have something to bring to the table and that when we come together, change happens.

**Kimberly Howard:** I want to leave with another focus on vision. There are multiple visions but, as with any great movement, there has to be an uber vision that we all sort of roll up into. Without the uber vision, we lose the power of the collective voice. In thinking about moving forward, I want to make sure that the *disruptors*—that’s a term that gets thrown around a lot in corporate America—have a voice at the table. We cannot be afraid to throw the baby out with the bathwater as long as we do not hurt the baby. Maybe we just need to start over. That might be necessary. We need to remember that, at the end of the day, the NEA and the state art agencies were created because of a belief in America, a belief in the democracy of everyone having access, a belief that the arts are part of the public good, and a belief that access to art is a right and not a privilege. If we are thinking about restructuring, we should remember the ideals upon which these agencies were built.

I made a joke about the founding fathers. They were white, but they still imagined a world that enables me to be sitting here talking with you today. They imagined a world where my sons will be able to do—who knows what?—but it is a world in which we have a free voice as citizens. Our public education system was meant to continue to educate us so that our free voices would also be informed voices. When the NEA and the state arts agencies were created, it was so that every American would have access to the arts experiences we have at home singing in our shower or whittling on our front porch.

I want to close by suggesting that everyone go back to the source before throwing everything out. Remember what it is that we ultimately seek to accomplish, and that is equity for all. I know the word is *equality* and I know *equity* and *equality* mean different things. However, at the core, there was an idealism that this country was built on. Our system may be flawed; however, because of that idealism, we have the ability to disrupt the system when change is needed.

**Larry Meeker:** I would like to begin my comments by focusing us on the political environment we are in. I think we cannot extract ourselves from the world around us, and I do not think we have connected a lot in this conference with those who would support Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders.

These two presidential candidates have had their finger on an element of change, and that change is certainly taking place. We live in a world in which massive change is increasingly common. We can either be part of that change, or we can be deer in the headlights. This brings to mind a comment by Charles Darwin, one of my favorites of all time. He says it is not the strongest of the species who survive or even the most intelligent but the species most adaptable to change. We in the arts world are a species, and our adaptability depends on our ability to change as we go forward.

I like the notions that came forth here about planning 20 or 50 years into the future. Looking that far forward now does not allow us to understand the world 20 years from now. We cannot understand the world five years from now. We do not know what the world is going to look like after the November elections. But the exercise of looking into the future unhinges us from the daily things with which we are involved with. The conversations here have been largely about funding and maintaining funding. If you really take a global view of the arts, you would need to assess that the NEA is not much farther along in terms of funding than shortly after it was founded. Until recently, California has been at the bottom in terms of funding for the state arts agency on a per-capita basis. Then I look at Kansas, and I see we have one staff member. One! In Kansas, we certainly are not in partnership with anybody, not even the Mid America Arts Alliance. So we are a state agency without the partnerships that are necessary in some sense to carry forward.

We need to look critically at our future. I think we need those political text lines. We live in an era where soundbites, as little as 140 characters, can make an impact on millions. If we cannot get our argument down to something in that range, we need to work at it until we do compress it. Looking forward, we need to look for some of those new bylines, some of those things that tie together the pieces that have been suggested here. Relationships—whether they are with prisons or education, whatever department it may be—are integral to everything we do. Further, the arts are the one language that connects all of us across all barriers and boundaries, offering us unbounded opportunities for the future.

**Erin Graham:** This has been a rich conversation and a very broad conversation, and I am excited to keep thinking about it. As many of you know, WESTAF is embarking on a major strategic planning process. WESTAF has been very dedicated to advocacy work, and we expect that work to continue. However, we are grappling with the question of how. The conversation we have had during this symposium will inform how we move forward in the area of advocacy.

When I think about vision and the pitfalls of setting a vision that is conscious of the needs of individuals and not aligning with power structures, I think about how we participate in a future where people have the ability to pursue their interests, to become fully engaged citizens, and to have access to the types of opportunities that would give them the tools to be able to do that.

There is good science and good data backing up the knowledge that the future of education and how we engage the world will actually be about proficiency and people pursuing their interests in a more self-guided way.

I think we need to ask ourselves how we as public arts agencies and cultural institutions can help guide that. How do we provide the public arts as a tool for that future? I would be interested in figuring out how we can continue that aspect of this conversation and have some additional voices in the room. In such a forum, we could focus on visioning.

I am also intrigued by the concept of experimenting Matt Wilson brought up because I very much like the idea that we should be design thinkers. We should be prototyping. It means maybe we do need to take risks, and there are ways that WESTAF can take on some of that risk because I know it is not always possible in state agencies. Are there some things that we can all agree on? Finding that out might actually lead us toward a vision. I think there would be some states willing to partner with us in that risk taking and see what it looks like, see what works. Expect that some things will not work. We will talk about them, reflect on them, reiterate, and try something else. But I like the idea of prototyping and trying some new things.

**Anthony Radich:** Instead of an elegant summary, I want to close this forum with some observations I did not have an opportunity to insert into the symposium discussion. One is that I am very much committed to the concept that the state arts agency director, more than anyone else in a state, is responsible for the health of the arts-advocacy organization. While one could argue that the responsibility lies elsewhere, because so much of the focus of state arts advocacy organizations is on the state arts agency, why would the arts agency director not be extremely interested in the health of the advocacy group? Former Ohio Arts Council executive director Wayne Lawson was one person who understood that relationship and that responsibility perfectly. But we do not uniformly have that kind of commitment across the country. In fact, we have had and continue to have state arts agency leaders who simply ignore their states' advocacy groups.

We have talked about strategy and tactics a great deal and not so much about a long-term vision. We need vision, I very much agree with that. But I suggest that we talk a lot about strategy and tactics because we have not been very good at them for the last 40 years. We are still frustrated by them. After 40 years, one would think that perhaps 42 state arts advocacy organizations would have full-time staffs and adequate budgets. So that is why we talk about tactics and strategy so much.

Regarding the need for a new vision, yes, we do need a new vision. However, I want to reflect on what was articulated by Sue Gens and Brad Erickson about the unused potential of the public sector. The public sector is a very powerful tool that we can put to work for us. We can do so provided we do not imagine state arts agencies as an alien object that was accidentally embedded into state government. As a field, I believe we have to work on that pervasive feeling and change the field's relationship to state government.

I will give you an example of the manifestation of this lack of a positive relationship with government. I will not mention the name of the regional, but years ago, I worked with a regional arts organization director who really thought the NEA was nothing more than a gold mine. He strategized how to burrow into the agency, extract cash, and then get out.

He had no interest in advocating for the agency nor considering partnering with the NEA to do things that only government can do. I think that is also a vision of a lot of state arts agencies. For them, the state is just a place to get some cash and nothing more. But state government has much more to offer the arts beyond cash, and the relationship between the arts agency and the state has the potential to be quite rich. So when we think of visioning, I am open to visioning anything, but I think we should start that process by visioning ourselves as vital parts of state government—not accidental parasites.

At this time, I also want to thank Matt Wilson for his advice on the design of this symposium. Matt is someone I have been in touch with for a quite a long time about topics for this symposium, whom to invite, and so on. Thank you, Matt, for your thoughtful help. I, of course, want to thank Larry Meeker and Kimberly Howard for their facilitation. It was excellent. Thank you. I also want to thank our staff, I will be asking them to stand up: Leah Horn, Natalie Villa, Laurel Sherman, and Ashlee Stephenson.



# Appendix

## Annotated List of Preliminary Symposium Readings

### Theories Related to Advocacy

#### Theories of Advocacy for Policy Change

In this work, the author argues that advocates seek changes in policy as a way to achieve impact at a scale and degree of sustainability that differs from what can be achieved through direct services or programs alone. Advocates and funders each come to policy work with a set of beliefs and assumptions about how change will happen, and these beliefs shape their thinking about what conditions are necessary for success, which tactics to undertake in which situations, and what changes need to be achieved along the way. These worldviews are, in actuality, theories of change.

Sarah Stachowiak: [Pathways for Change: 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts](#)

#### Community Organizing

This article focuses on the factors that lead to successful community organizing. In it, the author argues that community organizing, community-based development, and community-based service provision are distinct community-empowerment strategies.

Peter Dreier: [Community Empowerment Strategies: The Limits and Potential of Community Organizing in Urban Neighborhoods](#)

#### A Theory of the Policy Process

Evaluators of advocacy efforts need to understand how the policy process works. To do so, they must find ways of simplifying this typically complex process in order to evaluate the actors and their actions within it. There are a variety of theories that can form the conceptual underpinning of an evaluation involving the policy process. One particularly well-known theory comes from political scientist John Kingdon, and his theory is summarized here.

Harvard Family Research Project: [The Evaluation Exchange: A Periodical of Emerging Strategies in Evaluation](#)

## **State Legislative Appropriations to State Arts Agencies**

If state legislative appropriations to state arts agencies are a measure of the success of state arts advocacy, the past 20 years have not been kind. The Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) organization embraces public funders of the arts in their work and regularly issues a report on the status of appropriations to state arts agencies. The information in this document was prepared for GIA by the staff of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

Grantmakers in the Arts: [Public Funding for the Arts: 2015 Update](#)

### **Pre-Institutionalized Advocacy Today**

#### **Video--Artists in the Political Realm**

An artist and an activist recently teamed up to create a documentary series titled [Migration is Beautiful](#). The documentary addresses the debate surrounding immigration policy in the United States and the overall perception of immigrants. The three-episode project focuses on the growing influence of artists in the political realm.

Katherine Brooks: [Migration is Beautiful Documentary: Artist Favianna Rodriguez Talks Immigration Rights and Art's Role in Politics](#)

#### **Making Their Voices Heard Through Art**

This article reports on ways incarcerated youth are making their voices heard through the arts. Advocacy through the arts is often more than asking for money.

Priscilla Frank: [How Incarcerated Youth Are Making Their Voices Heard Through Art](#)

#### **Using Art in Advocacy**

State arts-advocacy efforts are surprisingly devoid of the rich use of the arts as advocacy tools. This is not the case elsewhere, as this article reports about how famous artists declare support for Ukraine through their art.

Katherine Brooks: [Famous Artists Declare Support for Ukraine in Incredible Way](#)

#### **Letters into Art into Advocacy**

In this article, the author details how artists have helped energize advocacy on behalf of imprisoned migrants. This has been accomplished through the visualization of selected communications found in the letters of incarcerated migrants. Symposium participants are directed to the segment of the paper that begins on page four of the document.

Priscilla Frank: [Artists Transform Heartbreaking Letters From Detained Migrants Into Gripping Works of Art](#)

## **WESTAF Papers Related to State Arts Advocacy**

### **Scenarios for Arts Agency Organization**

This paper was commissioned to explore ways state arts agencies might redesign and redeploy themselves as more effective organizations.

Anthony Radich: [Scenarios for the State Arts Agencies of the Future](#)

### **A Review of the Use of WESTAF Advocacy Funds**

This paper was prepared as a report to the WESTAF trustees on the outcome of the use of \$10,000 in advocacy funds made available to each WESTAF-region state each year. Please note that the state-by-state-report segment of the paper has been removed because it remains confidential. Symposium participants are encouraged to review the section of the paper that addresses overall concerns about state arts advocacy; that segment begins on page four of the document.

Keith Colbo and Anthony Radich: [WESTAF State Advocacy Funds Fiscal Year 2007 - A Report and Analysis of their Use](#)

## **Perspectives on Conditions Affecting Advocacy**

### **Funders and the Shaping of Advocacy**

This chapter of an anthology sponsored by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy examines four trends in philanthropic funding of social justice organizations and comments on what each has meant for democratic policymaking in America. The author concludes with a controversial but plausible argument—that funders created a political dilemma for progressive nonprofits today. Their program-oriented approach to funding has mired groups in “policy silos,” preventing these groups from forging a larger vision for public policy change. Symposium participants are directed to Chapter 7 on page 67.

Elizabeth J. Reid and Maria D. Montilla: [Exploring Organizations and Advocacy](#)

### **The Advocacy Work of Nonprofits**

If nonprofits want to effectively participate in policymaking processes, they must develop a solid understanding of the strategic options open to them and the challenges they face. The purpose of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of the parameters of the current debates about the advocacy work of nonprofits.

John Casey: [Understanding Advocacy: A Primer on the Policy Making Role of Nonprofit Organizations](#)

### **Three Reasons State Arts Agencies Will Decline**

In the early 1990s, John Urice, a senior arts-policy expert, warned of the stagnation and ultimate decline of state arts agencies. In this paper, he proposes three advocacy-related reasons he believes the agencies are poorly positioned to advance.

John Urice: [The Future of the State Arts Agency Movement in the 1990s: Decline and Effect](#)

### **History of State Arts Advocacy Organizations**

#### **The History of State Arts Advocacy Organizations**

Although this article is now 25 years old, it captures much of the history of the development and growth of state arts-advocacy organizations. The document is especially valuable as a record of what some of the early leaders in the field did to advance advocacy in the states and also of the challenge of building a national network.

Dennis Dworkin: [State Advocacy in the Arts: A Historical Overview](#)

#### **Three Case Studies of State Arts Advocacy**

This Ohio State University master's thesis, written by Janelle Hallett in 2008, presents an overview of state-level arts advocacy and includes case studies on the advocacy organizations of Illinois, Minnesota, and Ohio.

Janelle Hallett: [State Arts Agencies and State Arts Advocacy Groups: Partners in the Policy Process](#)

# Survey of State Arts Advocacy Organizations

Conducted by Barry Hessenius  
Audited and Amplified by the WESTAF Staff  
July, 2016

In advance of the October 2016 WESTAF symposium on state arts advocacy organizations, a survey of the organizations was commissioned. Conducted by former California Arts Council Director and current Cultural Policy Blogger Barry Hessenius, the preliminary results of the survey were presented at the symposium by WESTAF Executive Director Anthony Radich. Following the symposium, the WESTAF staff reconnected with all of those surveyed to do the following: a) Confirm that difficult-to-locate arts advocacy organizations were inactive or largely inactive; b) Interpret and confirm data on employment at state arts advocacy organizations in the form of full time equivalents; c) Identify how state advocacy organizations allocate their time to national, state, and other types of advocacy; and d) Confirm which of the initially interviewed arts advocacy organizations were primarily arts education advocacy organizations. Please note that the survey was designed to gather data on state arts advocacy organizations that have a broad mandate. The survey was not designed to include state arts advocacy organizations that primarily focus on arts education advocacy. While state arts education advocacy organizations engage to a degree in other kinds of arts advocacy, such organizations have a focus that is much narrower than a general state arts advocacy organization.

## Findings

- 1) During the first two months of the survey activity, 50 percent of all state arts advocacy organizations of record were not reachable after two or more efforts at contact by email and/or telephone. Many of the advocacy organizations that could not be reached had a website and contact information; however, no one responded to multiple inquiries communicated through those vehicles. The unresponsive organizations and those that needed to be tracked down through extensive research and networking have been labeled here as “inactive.” (See Figure 1)
- 2) Budgets of the advocacy organizations vary widely and no readily identifiable “average” budget was found. However, the organizations can be separated by budget size into six distinct clusters. (See Figure 2)
- 3) The majority of state arts advocacy organizations are lightly staffed with approximately three quarters of them having no staff, part-time staff, or volunteer staff. (See Figure 3)
- 4) The non-education-based state arts advocacy organizations focus largely on state issues; however, these organization also engage in federal arts advocacy and other advocacy issues. (See Figure 4)
- 5) A paid lobbyist is a feature of 46% of the organizations surveyed. (See Figure 5)

6) The sponsorship of an arts advocacy day at the legislature is a common--but not universal--activity among state arts advocacy organizations. (See Figure 6)

7) Approximately 33% of state arts advocacy organizations maintain both 501(c)3 and 501(c) 4 IRS-approved structures. (See Figure 7)

# Active and Inactive State Arts Advocacy Organizations

During the first two months of the survey process, 50 percent of all state arts advocacy organizations of record were not reachable by email and/or telephone after two or more efforts.

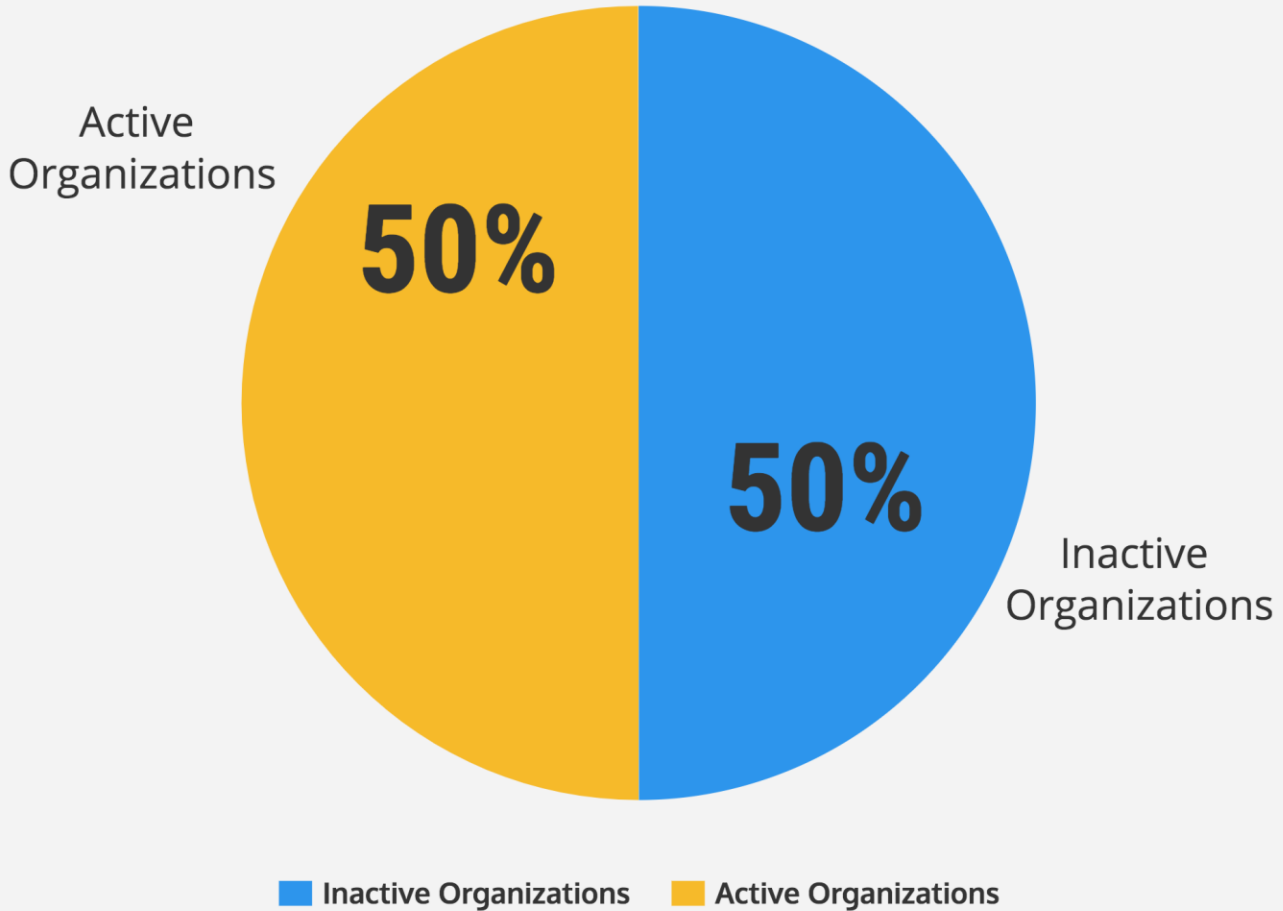
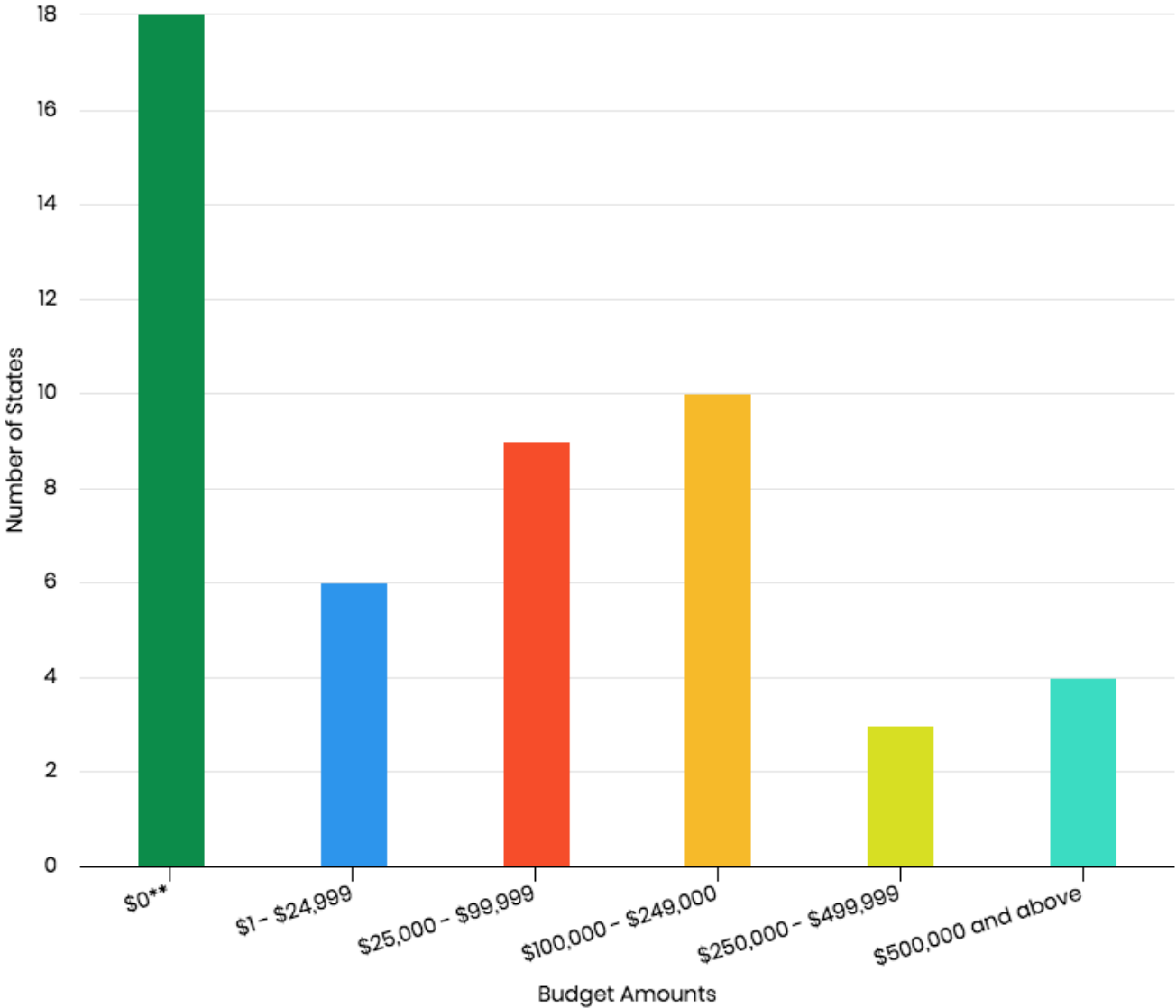


Figure 1

Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - August 2017, n = 50

# State Arts Advocacy Organization Budget Breakdown

Figure 2



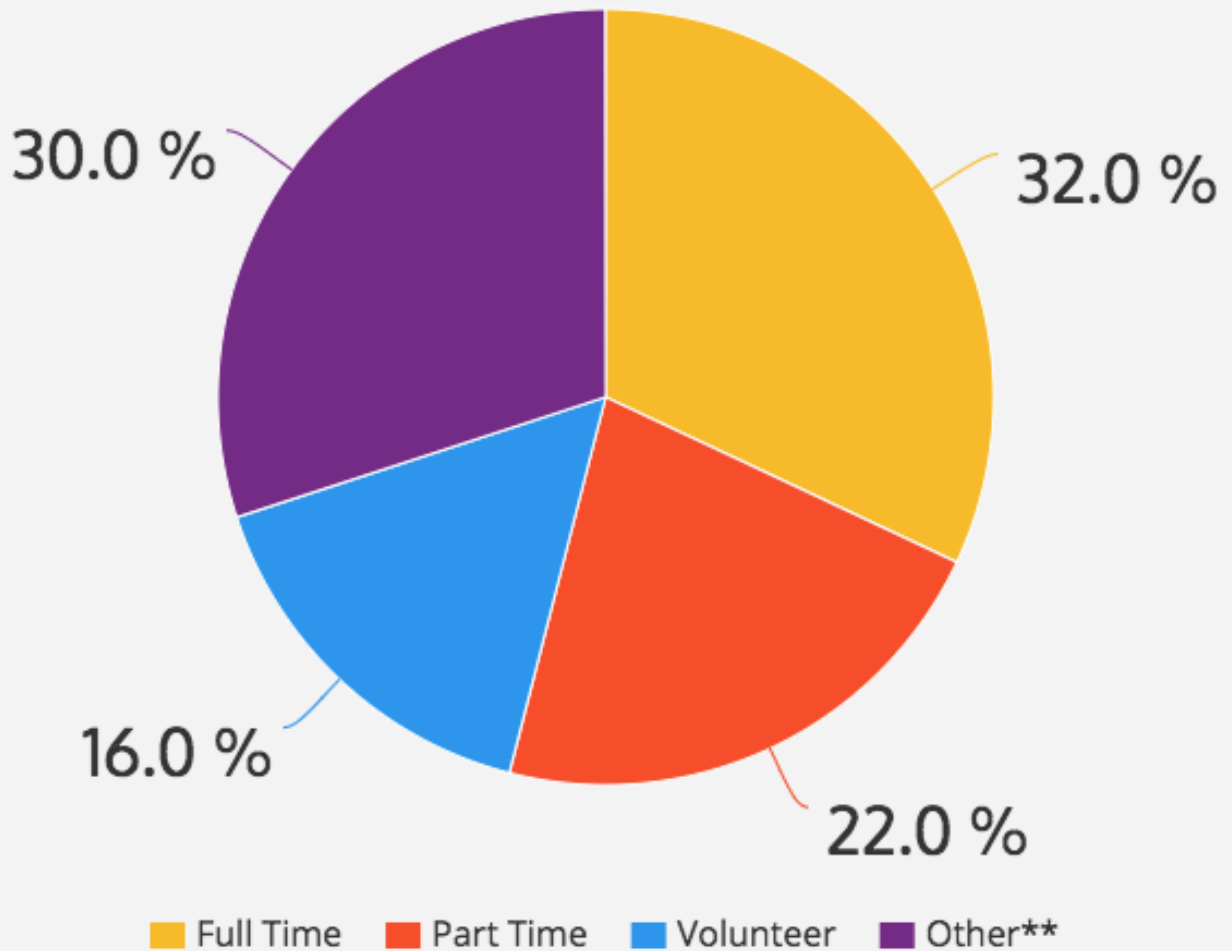
Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - September 2017; n = 50

\*\*Note: The organizations that WESTAF identified as inactive or primarily focused on arts education are included with the organizations with a \$0 budget. There are also two organizations that were reorganizing at the time the survey was being administered that are also listed in this section.



# Status of State Arts Advocacy Organizations' Staff Leadership

Figure 3



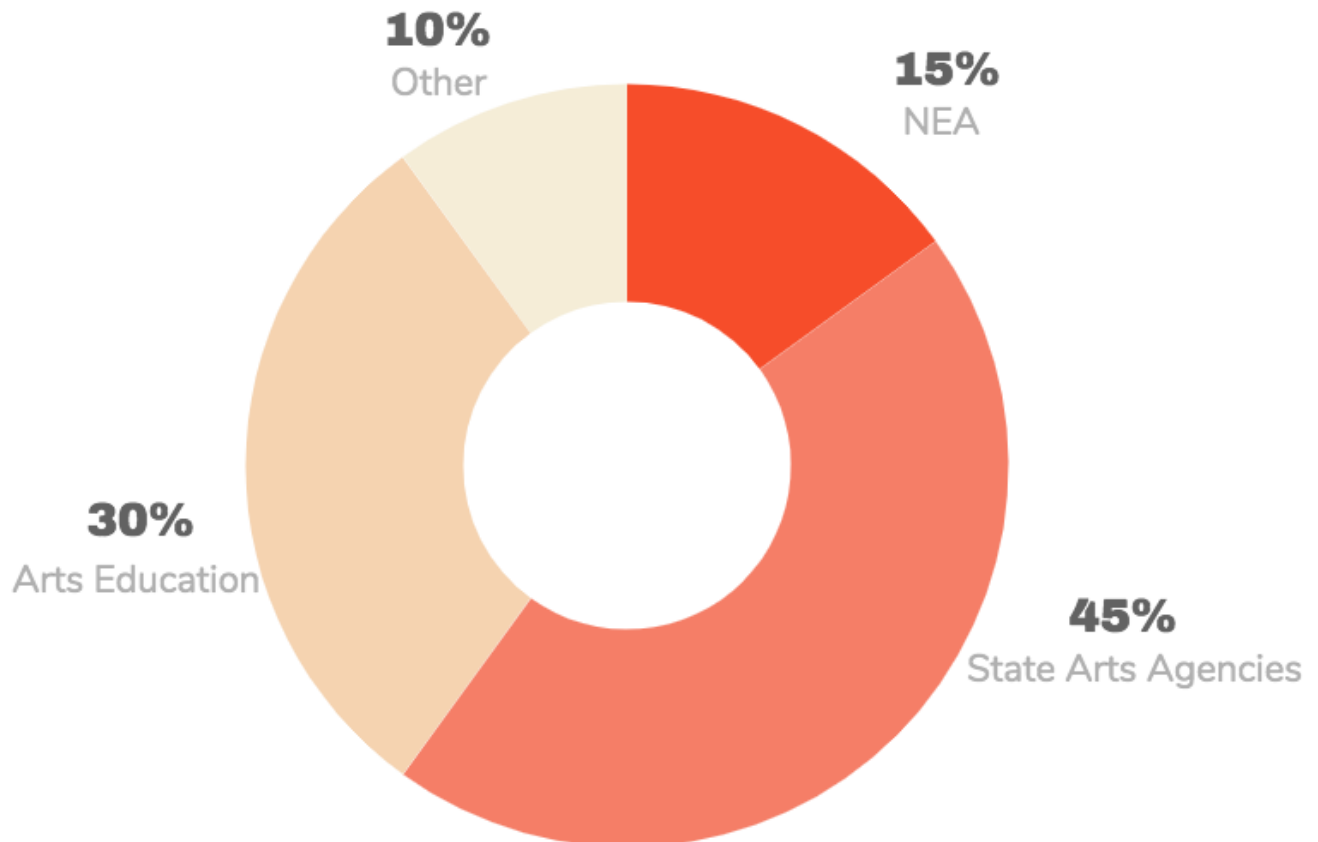
Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - September 2017 n = 50

\*\*Note: The organizations that WESTAF listed as inactive or primarily focused on arts education are represented in the Other section.

# Focus of Advocacy

The average amount of time advocacy organizations spend on various types of advocacy.

Figure 4



Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - September 2017, n=35

Note: The inactive organizations and organizations primarily focused on arts education are not included in the advocacy allocations above.

# Arts Advocacy Organizations' Lobbyists

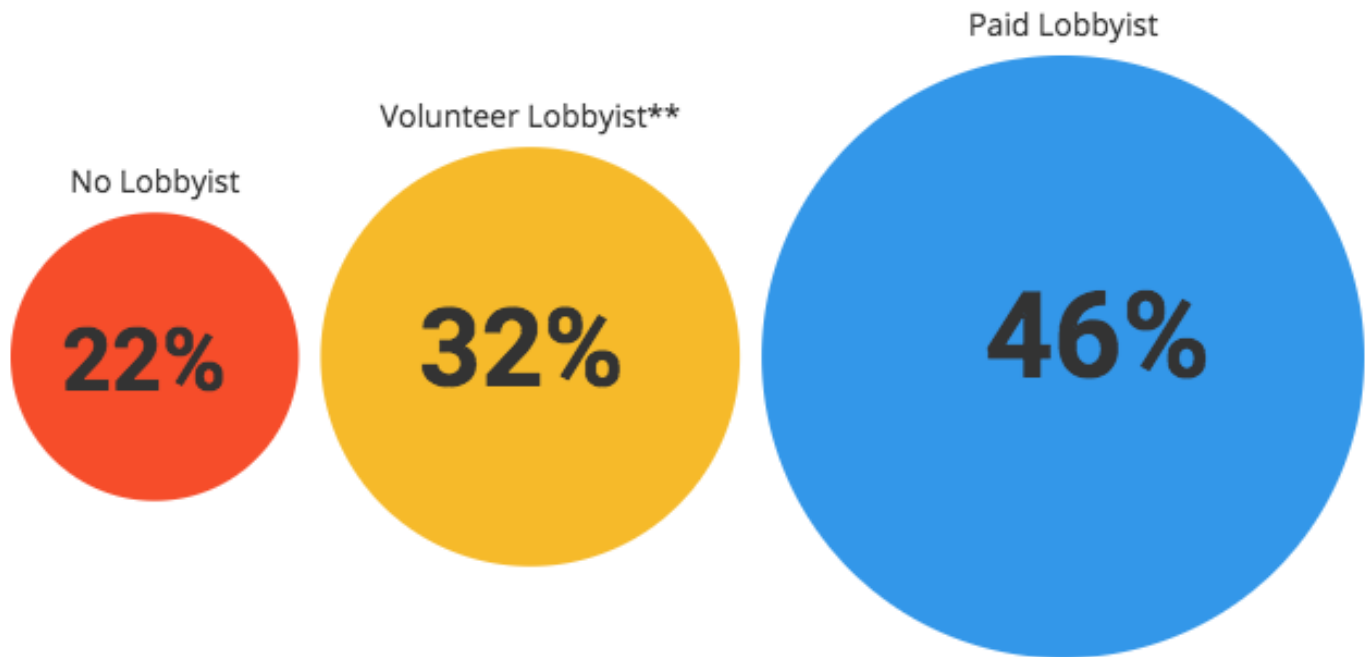


Figure 5

Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - September 2017, n = 50

\*\*Inactive organizations and organizations that primarily focused on arts education have been placed in the Volunteer Lobbyist section.

## State Arts Advocacy Organizations' Sponsorship of Arts Advocacy Day

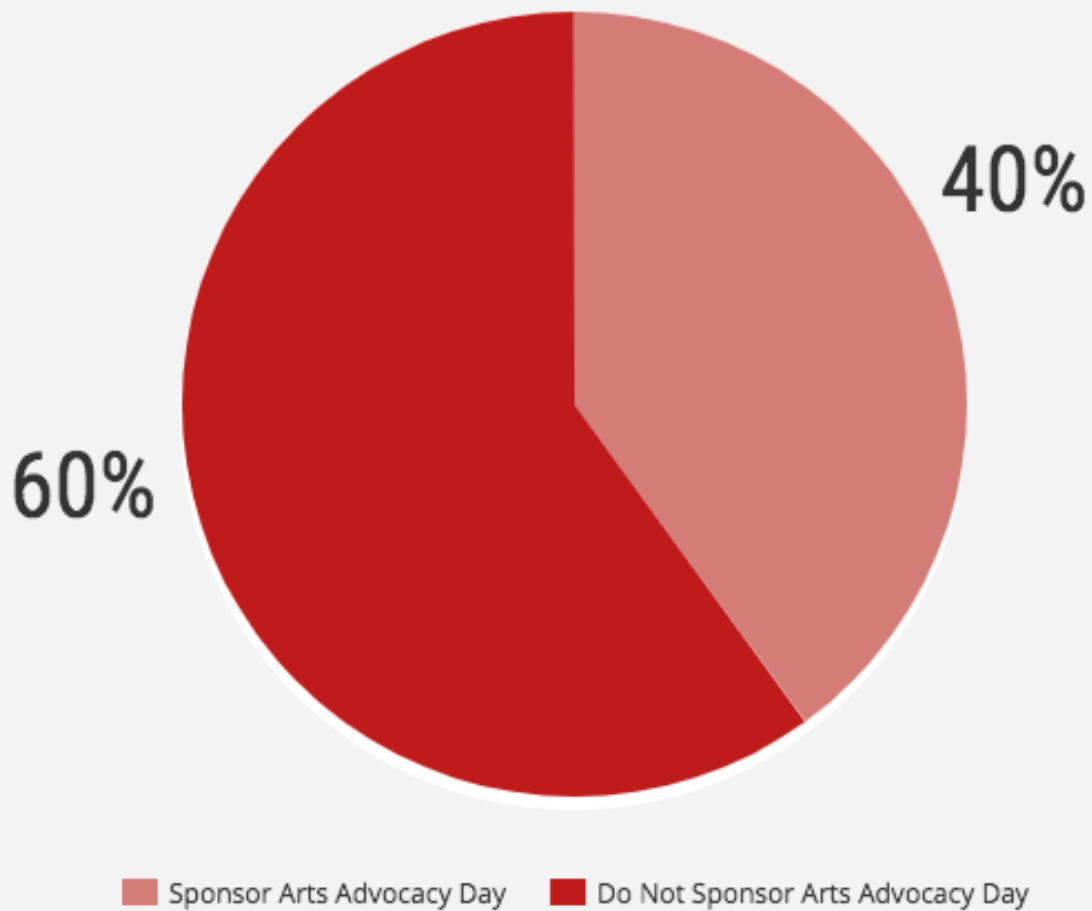
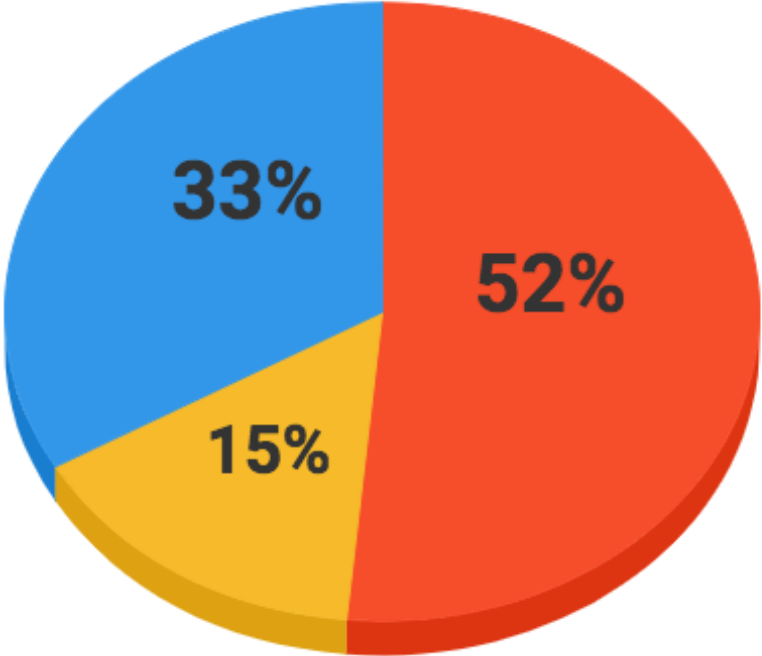


Figure 6

Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - September 2017; n = 35  
Percentages based on 35 active state arts advocacy organizations.

# State Arts Advocacy Organizations' Nonprofit Status



● 501(c)3 ● 501(c)4 ● Both 501(c)3 & 501(c)4

Figure 7

Source: WESTAF survey of state arts advocacy organizations July 2016 - September 2017; n = 33

\*\*Based on a survey of state arts advocacy organizations. Inactive organizations, organizations that primarily focused on arts education, and two active state arts advocacy organizations that have other models are not included.

# Symposium Agenda

## The Status and Future of State Arts Advocacy

The 2016 Symposium of the Western States Arts Federation  
Denver, Colorado | October 3-5, 2016

### Agenda

#### Symposium Description:

Successful state-level arts advocacy requires the active collaboration of several interests. These interests commonly include the state arts agency, the state arts advocacy organization, funders, and the political establishment. This symposium brings together voices from these interests. They are being convened in order to inform WESTAF leadership of ways it can most effectively strengthen its support for state arts advocacy in the region. They are also being brought together to contribute to the national knowledge base related to state-level arts advocacy efforts and to the ongoing conversation about how to make such efforts more effective.

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Monday, October 3, 2016

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5:00 p.m.

#### **Registration**

*Location: The ART Hotel, Fourth Floor Lobby*

6:15 p.m.

#### **Opening Reception**

*Location: The ART Hotel, Grand Colonnade*

- Welcome to the WESTAF region, Virginia Gowski, Chair, WESTAF
- Welcome on Behalf of Arts Advocates  
Richard Stein, President, California Arts Advocates  
Brad Erickson, Past President, California Arts Advocates

7:00 p.m.

#### **Dinner**

*Location: The ART Hotel, Ballroom South Central*

7:30 p.m.

#### **Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

- Anthony Radich, Executive Director, WESTAF

#### **Keynote Presentation**

*Trends in State Government that Will Impact the Future of State-Level Arts Advocacy*

- Tim Storey, Director of State Services, National Conference of State Legislatures

8:30 p.m.

#### **Questions and Discussion**

9:00 p.m.

#### **Adjourn**

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Tuesday, October 4, 2016

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8:00 a.m.      **Breakfast**  
*Location: The ART Hotel, Grand Colonnade*

8:30 a.m.      **Welcome and Symposium Ground Rules**  
*Location: The ART Hotel, Ballroom North*

Co-Facilitators:

- Larry Meeker, Chair, Kansas Creative Industries Commission
- Kimberly Howard, Community Education Specialist, Portland General Electric Foundation

8:40 a.m.      **Opening Remarks**

Co-Facilitators:

- Kimberly Howard, Community Education Specialist, Portland General Electric Foundation
- Larry Meeker, Chair, Kansas Creative Industries Commission

8:50 a.m.      **Introduction of Discussants**

- Cristina Aguilar, Executive Director, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
- Brian J. Carter, Heritage Lead, 4Culture, Seattle
- Virginia Gowski, Chair, WESTAF, Salt Lake City
- Erin Graham, Incoming Chair, WESTAF, Portland, Oregon

8:55 a.m.      Report on the results of a national survey of state arts advocacy organizations

9:10 a.m.      **The Status of State-Level Arts Advocacy**  
*Presenters in this session will explore the landscape of state arts advocacy as it exists today. They will identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing system and propose rationales for why the state arts advocacy field has emerged to take on the shape it has today.*

Presenters:

- Matthew Wilson, Executive Director, MASSCreative
- Pam Breaux, Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
- Richard Stein, President, California Arts Advocates
- Brad Erickson, Past President, California Arts Advocates

Respondents:

- Virginia Gowski, Chair, WESTAF
- Anthony Radich, Executive Director, WESTAF

Discussion

10:00 a.m.

**Lessons from Non-Arts State-Level Advocacy Efforts**

*Interest groups outside the field of arts and culture use a variety of means to secure funds and advantageous legislation for their causes. An examination of these entities may provide insights into how arts advocates can improve their effectiveness.*

Presenters:

- Catherine Foley, Executive Director, Arizona Citizens for the Arts
- John White, Attorney
- Michael Hillerby, Director of Legislative Affairs, Kaempfer Crowell

11:00 a.m.

Respondent:

- Sofia Klitzker, Executive Director, Arts for LA

Discussion

Noon

**Lunch**

*Location: The ART Hotel, Ballroom South Central*

1:00 p.m.

**Advocates Look to the Future**

*Location: The ART Hotel, Ballroom North*

*Unless state-level arts advocates are entirely satisfied with their position and situation, there are actions they can consider taking to advance their work and their effectiveness. The presenters in this segment will propose specific ideas regarding ways to advance state-level arts advocacy.*

Presenters:

- Sofia Klitzker, Executive Director, Arts for LA  
*What might be learned from successful local arts advocacy efforts*
- Janet Brown, President and CEO, Grantmakers in the Arts  
*State arts advocacy and the private foundation community*
- Sue Gens, Executive Director, Minnesota State Arts Board  
*Lessons learned from successfully working with big advocacy goals in Minnesota*



- 1:45 p.m. Respondents:
- Michael Hillerby, Director of Legislative Affairs, Kaempfer Crowell
  - Pam Breaux, Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
- 2:15 p.m. Discussion
- 2:45 p.m. **Summary Thoughts for the Day**
- Matthew Wilson, Executive Director, MASSCreative
  - Kimberly Howard, Community Education Specialist, Portland General Electric Foundation
  - Larry Meeker, Chair, Kansas Creative Industries Commission
- 3:00 p.m. Discussion
- 3:30 p.m. **Adjourn**
- 3:40 p.m. **Cocktail Reception**  
*Location: The ART Hotel, FIRE Lounge and Terrace*
- 6:25 p.m. **Transportation to Dinner Location**  
*Meet in the first-floor lobby of The ART Hotel*
- 7:00 p.m. **Dinner**  
*Location: The Fort Restaurant, Golden, CO*
- 9:15 p.m. **Adjourn**

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Wednesday, October 5, 2016

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- 8:30 a.m. **Breakfast**  
*Location: The ART Hotel, Grand Colonnade*
- 9:00 a.m. **State Arts Agency Directors and Advocacy**  
*Location: The ART Hotel, Ballroom North*

*The directors of state arts agencies can play a critical role in state arts advocacy activities. In this session, participants will hear from a state arts agency director who previously served as the head of the state's arts advocacy organization and another agency director who collaborated with a variety of interests to successfully rebuild the budget for a state arts agency.*

Presenters:

- Donna Collins, Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council  
*Looking at both sides of the State Arts Agency/State Arts Advocacy relationship*
- Craig Watson, Director, California Arts Council  
*Perspectives on the ways state-level arts advocacy leaders collaborated with the state arts agency director to rebuild the budget for the California Arts Council*

Respondents:

- Two respondents will be selected at the symposium. One or both of them may be symposium observers.

- 10:00 a.m.     **Additional Considerations**  
*Facilitated discussion of key issues that emerged throughout the symposium that need further consideration. The discussion will include symposium observers as well as the symposium's core participants.*
- 11:00 a.m.     **Concluding Remarks from Symposium Participants**  
*Each core symposium participant will have an opportunity to present some summary thoughts.*
- 11:30 a.m.     **Concluding Comments**
- Kimberly Howard, Community Education Specialist, Portland General Electric Foundation
  - Larry Meeker, Chair, Kansas Creative Industries Commission
- 11:45 a.m.     **WESTAF Concluding Comments and Thank You**
- Erin Graham, Incoming Chair, WESTAF
  - Anthony Radich, Executive Director, WESTAF
- Noon           **Adjourn**

**END**

## Participants' Biographies

### **Cristina Aguilar**

Cristina Aguilar is the executive director of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), Colorado's only reproductive justice organization. Aguilar also co-founded the LGBT advocacy organization People of Color Caucus for One Colorado and sits on their Political Action Committee. Previously, she worked in early childhood education at Community Development Institute, directing national Head Start Pilot Innovation Projects. There, she co-authored the book *Nonprofit's Guide to the Power of Appreciative Inquiry*. Aguilar has also been an appointee to the Mayor of Denver's LGBT Commission and is a contributor to *RH Reality Check, Feministing, and LatinasRepresent*. The Bonfils-Stanton Foundation selected Aguilar to be a Livingston Fellow in 2015 and she recently completed a Marshall Memorial Fellowship, where she travelled to five countries to explore reproductive justice. In 2015, Aguilar was named an Influential Woman of Color by the Colorado Black Roundtable. She is also the 2012 recipient of the Circle of Latina Leadership (CLL) Juana Bordas Leadership Legacy Award and was named to the 2012 Out Front Colorado Power List. Aguilar has a master's degree in communication from the University of Denver and a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at El Paso.

### **Janet Brown**

Janet Brown is president and CEO of Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) and a consultant, speaker, and teacher. Prior to her leadership role at GIA, she served as an adjunct faculty member at Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, where she taught public policy and the arts. She also served as chair of performing and visual arts at Augustana College. Brown began her arts management career in theatre, where her career included work at Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival, the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, and in a variety of european theatrical tours. She began her theatre career as an actress at the Black Hills Playhouse in South Dakota and was co-owner of the Deadwood Production Company for 10 years. A registered lobbyist for 15 years, Brown served as the executive director of South Dakotans for the Arts, a statewide service, education, and advocacy organization. She is the co-founder of the Community Arts Network, an association of statewide service and advocacy organizations that evolved into the State Arts Advocacy Network, which is currently administered by Americans for the Arts. Brown has received numerous awards for arts advocacy, including the Selena Roberts Ottum Award from Americans for the Arts and the Robert Gard Award from the University of Massachusetts Arts Extension Service (AES). She has served on many local and national boards of directors, including Americans for the Arts and the American Folklife Center, and has been a panelist and site evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts and several state arts agencies. She has a bachelor's degree in theatre and a master's degree in public administration from the University of South Dakota.

**Pam Breaux**

Pam Breaux became the CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) in 2015. In that position, she works in collaboration with the NASAA board of directors to advance the organization's federal policy agenda. A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, Breaux has held leadership positions at the local, state, and national levels. She most recently served as assistant secretary of the Office of Cultural Development at the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT). She is a former secretary of CRT and also served as executive director of the Louisiana Division of the Arts. During her time at CRT, Breaux led Louisiana's cultural economy initiative and spearheaded the state's attainment of UNESCO recognition of Poverty Point as a World Heritage site. Prior to working in state government, Breaux managed southwest Louisiana's Decentralized Arts Funding Program and served as the executive director of the Arts and Humanities Council of Southwest Louisiana. She has served on the boards of NASAA, South Arts, the Louisiana Board of International Commerce, and the U.S. Travel Association. She graduated from McNeese State University with a bachelor's degree in English, and has a master's degree in English and folklore from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

**Donna Collins**

Donna Collins became director of the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) in 2014. Prior to leading the OAC, she served as the executive director of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE) and as the executive director of the Ohio Citizens for the Arts and Foundation (OCA). During her tenure, both the OAAE and OCA were recognized for increasing services to constituents, creating policy, and generating additional funds for the arts. Collins has worked with the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN) on the Network Leadership Committee and as a consultant to state alliances across the nation. She also served as an Americans for the Arts state captain and served on the State Arts Action Network Council as vice-chair and chair. Collins has received multiple awards for her work, including the Distinguished Fellow and Arts Administration Award by the Ohio Art Education Association and VSA Ohio's Fran Bay Award. Collins studied education at Otterbein University and child development and communications at the Columbus Technical Institute.

**Brian J. Carter**

As 4Culture's heritage lead, Brian J. Carter works collaboratively with regional heritage organizations, heritage specialists, and community members interested in heritage issues. He oversees 4Culture's heritage funding programs. Carter brings over 13 years of experience working in the heritage field in a variety of roles. Before joining 4Culture, he served as director of interpretation at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle, and as museum director at the Oregon Historical Society. He began his career as deputy director and head curator at the Northwest African American Museum. Carter is a graduate of Stanford University and the University of Washington's Master of Arts in Museology program. He is currently the board president of the Association of African American Museums and an instructor with the University of Washington's Museum Studies Certificate Program.

### **Brad Erickson**

Brad Erickson is the executive director of Theatre Bay Area, one of the nation's largest regional performing arts service organizations. The organization serves 300 theatre and dance company members and more than 2,100 individual artist members. Erickson served as the president of the board for California Arts Advocates and Californians for the Arts for a six-year period. He currently serves as treasurer of both groups. Additionally, Erickson serves as the California state captain for Americans for the Arts, as a steward of Arts for a Better Bay Area. Previously, Erickson chaired the Mid-Market Project Area Committee of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. Before joining Theatre Bay Area in 2003, Erickson served as executive director of the Northern California Supplier Development Council, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and strengthening ethnic minority-owned businesses. Erickson is also a playwright. His play *Woody & Me* received a National Endowment for the Arts grant for its 2001 world premiere at the Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis and was selected as best new play in the 2000 Festival of Emerging American Theatre. Erickson received a bachelor's degree in acting from the Goodman School of Drama (now the Theatre School) at DePaul University.

### **Catherine "Rusty" Foley**

Catherine "Rusty" Foley was appointed executive director of Arizona Citizens for the Arts in July 2011 after having served an interim executive for 10 months. Previously, she had been a board member of since 2003 and served as president of both organizations. A lifelong Phoenician, Foley has spent her career as a communications and public affairs professional and a community leader. As an arts activist, she also has served on the boards of Childsplay and the Arizona Theatre Company, and on the Phoenix Art Museum Corporate Council. She was named the Phoenix Arts and Business Council's Arts Board Member of the Year in 2007, received Phoenix Theatre's "Women Who Care" award for outstanding achievement in 2009, and was recognized as a Leader in Public Policy for Arts and Humanities in 2012 by the Arizona Capitol Times. She also serves on Americans for the Arts' State Arts Advocacy Network Council.

### **Sue Gens**

Sue Gens is executive director of the Minnesota State Arts Board. She joined the Board in 2001 and previously served as the agency's director of communication and government relations and its interim executive director. Before joining the Arts Board, Gens was director of external relations for the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities); and director of development for United Arts, a federated fundraising organization for small and mid-sized arts organizations in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. Gens has worked in the Twin Cities' nonprofit and public sectors for 30 years. She has held management, public relations, marketing, or development positions at the Children's Theatre Company, Minnesota Orchestra, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, COMPAS, and the Women's Theatre Project. She is a graduate of Minnesota State University Moorhead, with degrees in music and arts administration.

**Virginia Gowski**

Virginia Gowski is the director of Gowski and Partners, a marketing and strategic planning consultancy. She moved from Washington, DC to Utah in 2002, working first at the Sundance Institute/Film Festival as associate director of marketing and licensing, and then as director of marketing for the University of Utah's Division of Continuing Education. As director at Reingold, Inc., a boutique marketing/communications/training firm and for Markowitz & McNaughton, Inc., she worked with numerous nonprofit, educational, and corporate clients on topics ranging from workforce development to milking machines to inner-city youth leadership programs to industrial turbines. She also worked for several years for the Council for International Educational Exchange. She has three young children, is the chair of the WESTAF board of trustees, and volunteers with numerous Salt Lake City-based nonprofit organizations. She serves on the board of Utah's Art Access, the Tumbleweeds Children's Film Festival, and SHIFT (formerly Spy Hop Institute for Teachers). Gowski is former chair of the Utah Cultural Alliance and is an active member of the American Marketing Association and Americans for the Arts. Gowski graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in foreign affairs.

**Erin Graham**

Erin Graham is the chief operating officer for the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), where she oversees marketing, retail, exhibits, programs, facilities, and IT. In her previous role as vice president for development at OMSI, she led significant year-over-year increases in private contributions while simultaneously launching OMSI's first capital campaign in 20 years. Before joining OMSI, Graham served as member relations manager for Business for Culture and the Arts and as director of operations and in-house counsel for a company dedicated to connecting independent musicians and industry professionals through innovative technologies. In her community work, Graham is immediate past chair of the advisory board for the Bolz Center MBA in the Wisconsin School of Business at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She also serves as secretary of the board of trustees for WESTAF (Western States Arts Federation), and as a development committee member for the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). She frequently consults local nonprofit organizations on fundraising. Graham has a master's degree in arts administration and a juris doctor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Michael Hillerby**

Michael Hillerby is director of legislative affairs for Kaempfer Crowell, a Nevada law firm with a wide range of statewide and national clients. In addition to lobbying, his work includes strategic guidance and public affairs for clients in the healthcare, insurance, financial services, manufacturing, design, real estate, retail, telecommunications, and utility and automotive manufacturing sectors, among others. Hillerby served as chief of staff to former Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn, where he was responsible for the day-to-day management of the Governor's office, oversight of the Cabinet and the various agencies of state government, and advising the governor on policy and strategy. Hillerby was previously the director of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs and the arts and culture manager for the City of Reno. He is a trustee and former chairman of the board of the Nevada Museum of Art and was a gubernatorial appointee to the Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs. He also serves on the board of the

Friends of the Nevada Governor's Mansion. Hillerby has a bachelor's degree from the University of Nevada.

### **Kimberly Howard**

Kimberly Howard is the community education specialist at Portland General Electric (PGE). Howard also serves as the program officer for the PGE Foundation, the corporate foundation of Portland General Electric. Prior to joining PGE, Howard served as the trust manager for the Oregon Cultural Trust, managing director at Portland's Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, and education/outreach director for Artists Repertory Theatre. Howard currently serves on the Oregon State Board of Education. She also serves on the board of directors for Oregon Humanities, Portland Playhouse, and the Center for Performance and Civic Practice. She also represents Oregon on WESTAF's Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee. In addition to being a community education specialist, Howard is an accomplished actress, with credits in New York, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and several Portland theaters. After attending Wellesley College, Howard received her bachelor's degree from Pacific Union College, where she majored in political economic history. She holds a master's degree from Columbia University.

### **Sofia Klatzker**

Sofia Klatzker is the executive director of Arts for LA, a regional advocacy organization dedicated to promoting arts and culture across government, education, business, and community life. Under her leadership, the ACTIVATE advocacy leadership training program more than doubled in size and now includes 132 leaders; created a new mobile website connecting Arts for LA's 50,000 members with local officials; surveyed over 350 candidates across 60 local elections in 2015; and launched a campaign to register arts and cultural organizations to become polling stations. She has over 16 years of experience advocating for and implementing arts policies, arts education programming, and grant making. Klatzker currently serves on the boards of California Arts Advocates and Californians for the Arts, is a member of the California Alliance for Arts Education's Policy Council, and the Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network Advisory Council. Klatzker received her bachelor's degree in electronic music composition from the Oberlin Conservatory and her master's degree in arts administration from Goucher College.

### **Larry Meeker**

Larry Meeker is the president of Meeker Consulting and a professor in the Business and Criminal Justice Department of Western New Mexico University, where he leads one of 19 introductory economic development courses linked to universities and sanctioned by the International Economic Development Council. Meeker currently chairs the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission, the Public Art Commission of Johnson County, and the Johnson County Museum Foundation Board. While chairing the Arts Council of Johnson County, he led a suburban arts initiative that linked the arts with economic development, produced an arts business plan for the county, and passed a one-percent-for-art law that created the Public Art Commission of Johnson County. Meeker holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a doctorate in business administration from the University of Kansas.

**Anthony Radich**

Anthony Radich has served as the executive director of WESTAF (the Western States Arts Federation) since August of 1996. In that capacity he is responsible for providing leadership to the 13-state regional arts organization's programs and special initiatives. He oversees WESTAF's work in the areas of research, advocacy, and online systems development designed to benefit the cultural community. Prior to accepting his position at WESTAF, Radich served as the executive director of the Missouri Arts Council for eight years. There, he led the successful effort to create a state cultural trust fund supported by a stream of dedicated state funding. Preceding his work in Missouri, Radich was the senior project manager for the Arts Tourism and Cultural Resources Committee of the National Conference of State legislatures. As senior project manager, he worked with state legislators from across the country to develop state-level legislation and policy concerned with the arts, tourism, and historic preservation. While working for the Conference, Radich was appointed by Denver's Mayor Federico Peña to chair the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs, the city's arts agency. Radich holds a bachelor's degree in physical anthropology from the University of Oregon. He also earned a master's degree in art education from that university. He holds a doctorate from the Graduate School of Public Affairs of the University of Colorado Denver.

**Richard Stein**

Richard Stein was appointed executive director of Arts Orange County in 2008. He is currently serving a third term as president of the board of directors of California Arts Advocates and Californians for the Arts, two statewide organizations promoting the interests of the arts community. He played a central role in securing a significant increase in funding for the California Arts Council. The centerpiece of his career was transforming the Laguna Playhouse in Laguna Beach from a seasonal amateur theatre company into a year-round professional resident theatre company with a \$7 million budget. Over the course of 17 years as the Playhouse's executive director, he produced more than 100 plays and directed several notable premieres. He has served on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres and also as a panelist and site visitor for the National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, WESTAF, California Arts Council, Connecticut Commission on the Arts, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, and Riverside Arts Council. Stein holds degrees from Columbia and Syracuse universities.

**Tim Storey**

Tim Storey is the director of state services at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). He specializes in elections, redistricting, and legislative organization and management. Storey has staffed NCSL's redistricting and elections committee for over 20 years and authored numerous articles on redistricting and elections. Every two years, Storey directs NCSL's effort, StateVote, to collect and analyze state election results. He has participated in and led studies of legislative operations for more than 30 state legislatures and parliaments around the world. Storey has worked with legislators at NCSL for more than 25 years. He holds a master's degree in public policy from the University of Colorado Denver.



**Craig Watson**

Craig Watson is the director of the California Arts Council. Prior to assuming that position, he served as the executive director of the Arts Council for Long Beach. Watson has an extensive background in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. He has held senior executive positions in the telecommunications field in Rhode Island, New York, and California. His earlier career in the arts included positions with the Sonoma County Arts Council and Rural Arts Services in northern California, a fellowship at the National Endowment for the Arts, participation in the Coro Foundation's Arts Management program, and a co-directing position at Santa Barbara Arts Services. He previously served on the WESTAF board of trustees. Watson has experience as a visual artist in addition to his experience in the business sector and as an arts administrator. He studied fine arts at Occidental College and trained as a sculptor.

**John White**

John White has extensive experience surrounding construction and alternative energy development litigation in the New Orleans area as well as hands-on experience working with and in small businesses. He is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association and admitted to practice in all Louisiana State Courts, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and the United States Tax Court. White attended the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia, where he was the editor-in-chief of the law review and his studies focused on public interest law, including fair housing, disability law, government oversight of medical facilities, prison reform, and responsible corporate governance. Additionally, White is a graduate of the Corcoran School of Art and former student representative to the Washington Project for the Arts board of directors.

**Matthew Wilson**

Matthew Wilson is the executive director of MASSCreative, the statewide advocacy voice for the arts and cultural community in Massachusetts. In just over four years, MASSCreative has grown to more than 400 organizational members, with more than 25,000 individuals taking part in advocacy actions. Prior to joining MASSCreative, Wilson organized campaigns on the community, state, national, and international level for a cleaner environment, in support of affordable and accessible healthcare, to fight corporate power, and to elect progressive government leaders. Wilson graduated from Dartmouth College and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He serves on a variety of nonprofit boards and is active in town issues in his hometown of Reading, Massachusetts.

## Symposium Observers

### **Teniqua Broughton**

Teniqua Broughton is the founder and operator of Verve Simone Consulting, LLC. Previously, Broughton managed the Cultural Participation department at Arizona State University (ASU) Gammage. Broughton has contributed to the Live Nation Arts Education Task Force and has served as vice-chair of the Arts Learning committee for City of Phoenix Arts and Culture Commission. Her most recent recognition was the honor of being named the 2014 Community Leader in Arts Education by the Arizona Community Foundation's Black Philanthropy Initiative (BPI). Broughton holds a master's degree in educational administration and supervision and a bachelor's degree in education psychology, with an emphasis in theater for youth.

### **Gay Cookson**

In 2015, Gay Cookson was appointed director of the Utah Division of Arts and Museums by Governor Gary R. Herbert. Prior to accepting the position, Cookson served as senior director of development for the arts at the University of Utah, where she conducted a \$100 million campaign. Cookson has also held several positions at KUED, one of the nation's leading public television stations and served in the Ballet West administration. She earned her master's degree in arts administration and bachelor's degree in university studies in finance at the University of Utah.

### **Elisabeth Dorman**

Elisabeth Dorman joined Americans for the Arts (AFTA) in March 2014. Dorman facilitates the Americans for the Arts' State Arts Action Network (SAAN). She also guides the Americans for the Arts' VoterVoice affiliate program and its online advocacy platform. In addition, Dorman provides support for state and local affiliate members. A Pittsburgh native, Dorman holds a bachelor's degree in music with a concentration in classical voice performance from Duquesne University.

### **Karen Ewald**

Karen Ewald is the art in public places manager for the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. Ewald previously served as resource coordinator for the Coalition for a Drug Free Hawai'i and as a program manager for the Natural History Museum of LA County. Ewald studied art and art history at San Diego State University and California State University.

### **Michael Faison**

Michael Faison is the executive director of the Idaho Commission on the Arts. Faison previously served as the arts in education division director at the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the assistant director of the Oregon Arts Commission, and the executive director of the Center for Arts Management and Technology at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Faison is a member of the WESTAF board of trustees. He holds a bachelor's degree in studio art from the University of Texas at Austin, a master's degree in management from Carnegie Mellon University, and multiple Texas teaching certifications.

**Loie Fecteau**

Loie Fecteau is the executive director of New Mexico Arts and its advisory board, the New Mexico Arts Commission. Fecteau serves on the board of directors of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) and is currently 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president. Fecteau also serves on WESTAF's board of trustees and is a member of the WESTAF Multicultural Advisory Committee. She is also the New Mexico state captain for Americans for the Arts. Fecteau received a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a bachelor's degree in English from Marietta College.

**Karen Hanan**

In 2014, Karen Hanan was appointed executive director of ArtsWA (Washington's state arts agency) by Governor Jay Inslee. Prior to that appointment, Hanan served as executive director of Arts Northwest, a regional service organization for the performing arts. Hanan is well known as a resource to the greater arts community in the northwestern USA, and, in 2014, she was honored with a Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her "exceptional leadership and dedication to the field." Hanan currently serves as a WESTAF trustee.

**Margaret Hunt**

Margaret Hunt became director of Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) in 2013. Prior to her accepting her position at CCI, Hunt was the director of the Utah Division of Arts and Museums. She has received the governor's leadership award, Utah Small Cities, Inc., for contributions to community and economic development. Hunt is a visual artist with work hanging in the Salt Lake City International Airport. She attended the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado.

**Susan Jenson**

Susan Jenson has a master of arts degree and 35 years of experience in arts management, including 18 years with Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA). There she works in community art education programs with a focus on youth. Under her leadership, DAVA has actively involved thousands of young people in free arts education, resulting in a series of state and national awards, including a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award in November of 2014.

**Jonathan Johnson**

Jonathan Johnson is the executive director of the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (HSFCA). He has been with the HSFCA since 1988, holding many positions within the agency, including registrar for the Art in Public Places Program and director of the Hawai'i State Art Museum. Johnson is well known in the Hawai'i arts and architecture community for managing over 100 major public art projects on all of the state's islands. He was recently elected by his peer executive directors to serve as a WESTAF trustee. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in design with an emphasis on business administration from California Lutheran University.

**Michael Lange**

Michael Lange has served as executive director of the Wyoming Arts Council since 2014. Prior to accepting that position, he served as the community development specialist for the Arts Council and worked for the University of Wyoming, where he used the arts as a catalyst for co-curricular student development initiatives. Lange is a trustee for the Western States Arts Federation. He is also a musician and composer, performing mostly in the jazz idiom, and holds a bachelor's degree in music and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Wyoming.

**Bill Lindstrom**

Bill Lindstrom is operations manager of the Wyoming Arts Alliance (WyAA), the state's arts advocacy organization responsible for promoting and supporting artists, creative organizations, and cultural development in communities across Wyoming. For more than 30 years, Lindstrom has been involved in the creative industries, helping establish local cultural development organizations all over the world. Lindstrom also currently serves as executive director of Arts Cheyenne. Prior to his WyAA position, Lindstrom was chief executive officer of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). Lindstrom has been a frequent speaker on multimedia and cultural commission best practices and financing/incentive topics for more than 20 years. Lindstrom studied journalism and mass communication at Iowa State University.

**Andrea Noble-Pelant**

Andrea Noble-Pelant is the acting director for the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA). Noble-Pelant has worked at ASCA since 2006, where she oversees the state's Art in Public Places Program, the Percent-for-Art Collection, and the State Writer Laureate program. Noble-Pelant also manages a portfolio of ASCA grant programs. She was a secondary art educator with the Anchorage School District and curator of art education at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Noble-Pelant holds a bachelor's degree in art and French from the University of Western Ontario and a bachelor's degree in art education from the University of British Columbia.

**Bruce Richardson**

Bruce Richardson is a board member of the Wyoming Arts Alliance, former chair of the Wyoming Arts Council, and former board member and officer of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). He received the Wyoming Governor's Arts Award in 2014 and NASAA's Distinguished Public Service Award in 2016. Recently retired, Bruce taught at the University of Wyoming at Casper for 31 years. In 2015, Richardson received the University of Wyoming's highest teaching honor, the Ellbogen Lifetime Teaching Award. Richardson holds a doctorate from the University of California at Los Angeles.

**Brian Rogers**

Brian Rogers was named executive director of the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust in June of 2014. Rogers served as deputy executive director of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts for 16 years, where he was responsible for grant programs, financial oversight, and the administration of the agency.

He holds a bachelor's degree from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, where he majored in painting. Rogers earned a master's degree from the Graduate School of Art at the University of Arizona.

### **Anne Romens**

Anne Romens is program director at Arts Midwest. Romens leads the design and advancement of the Arts Midwest program *Creating Connection*. This national communications and engagement effort is focused on making arts, culture, and creative expression a more recognized, valued, and expected part of everyday life. In her role, Romens helps develop a platform for a stronger, more vital arts environment on a national scale by working with regional and national partners, funders, and advisors.

### **Karmen Rossi**

Karmen Rossi is a field representative for U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming. In her position, she oversees a six-county service area in which she interacts with business and community leaders and assists constituents who are reaching out for assistance with federal agencies. Prior to accepting that position, she served as the the director for the Wyoming Arts Alliance (WyAA), a state-wide non-profit arts organization that seeks to provide a voice and effective advocacy for the arts. At WyAA, Rossi oversaw the annual Block-Booking conference, Arts Advocacy Day, and the general operations of the statewide organization. Prior to working for WyAA, she served as interim executive director of the Wyoming Affiliate of Susan G. Komen. Rossi holds a bachelor's degree in international affairs from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

### **Jay Seller**

Jay Seller is the executive director of Think 360 Arts for Learning and the president of Arts for Colorado. In 2013, the Colorado Theatre Guild awarded Sellers and the Colorado Thespians for Outstanding Work in Arts Advocacy. Seller completed his doctorate at Walden University in organizational leadership, with a special emphasis on at-risk youth.

### **San San Wong**

San San Wong directs the Barr Foundation's Arts and Creativity portfolio. She currently serves on the Steering Committee for the City of Boston's cultural planning process and on the board of Grantmakers in the Arts, a national leadership and service organization that supports the growth of arts and culture. Wong earned a master's degree in community psychology from New York University and a bachelor's degree in clinical psychology from Smith College.

### **Dinah Zeiger**

Dinah Zeiger is retired from the University of Idaho, where she taught First Amendment law in both the College of Law and the Journalism and Mass Media Department. She pursued a Ph.D. late in life, following a 25-year career as a journalist for publications ranging from London bureau chief for the Knight-Ridder Financial Wire to the *Wall Street Journal Europe* to the Denver Post and as a freelance writer. In the latter capacity, Zeiger came to work for WESTAF, producing a wide array of research projects from policy analyses to program critiques. She is presently at work creating an archive of WESTAF's papers since its inception in the 1970s.

WESTAF  
1743 Wazee Street, Suite 300  
Denver, CO 80202  
303.629.1166

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