

## Advancing the Arts to Support National Policy Priorities

The arts and creative practices are inextricably embedded in American life, are uniquely positioned to tell the story of our nation's people, and are inseparable from our diverse heritages. Just as the arts are interwoven into the economies, health care, expression, and education of our nation and its global partnerships, a vast array of policies impacts our individual and collective cultural well-being. The arts are a powerful conduit for communication, inspiration, and unity, and their inclusion will inform and improve the policy-making process.

We urge the new Administration to leverage the arts to their full potential by identifying and raising their visibility in policy issues that cut across federal agencies, including economic and community development, health and wellness, veteran and active duty military care, education and youth development, international diplomacy and cultural exchange, and technology and communications policy. The following actions can pave the way for the arts to be featured more prominently in the development of longer-term and additional policy objectives in the future.

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### EQUITABLE ACCESS

- **Ensure that America's arts and cultural policies enable full participation by all.** We value equitable policies and practices that provide access to resources that ensure all people have the opportunity to experience, demonstrate, learn, and participate in the rich artistic and cultural legacies that comprise our nation and will shape our future. We encourage you to develop these policies with the advice and expertise of arts and cultural leaders representing a diversity of people, communities, and artistic and cultural practices.
- **Support expanded grant-making at cultural agencies.** The federal cultural agencies play a unique role in broadening arts participation by stimulating lifelong learning, spurring economic development, and anchoring community identity. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services serve critical functions and disburse grants throughout the country. These grants have spurred the growth of arts activity—including arts education programs, performances, film programs, exhibitions, and collections care—often in rural and inner-city communities.
- **Invest in our artistic infrastructure by providing full eligibility for artists to federal programs and services.** Individual and self-employed artists contribute to the economic and cultural strength of our country, but often do not have full access to Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance, programs of the Small Business Administration, and other services.

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### ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Support charitable giving by preserving the full scope and value of the charitable deduction and improving it to incentivize even more donations.** On average, 30% of the nonprofit arts sector's annual revenue comes from private contributions. Charitable giving enables America's nonprofit arts organizations to increase access to the arts; provide arts education for children and adults; and spur economic growth through jobs, tourism, and other business activity. Tax policy should incentivize more charitable contributions, which will increase the services nonprofit arts organizations are able to provide their communities.
- **Realize the full potential of the arts to make communities healthier and more vibrant through the programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).** The arts regularly address current CNCS focus areas. Support for the arts through a dedicated Artist Corps would provide an opportunity for creative skills to be utilized in engaging with communities across the country.

- **Support expanded funding opportunities for arts and design-based research that leads to new economic development opportunities.** Collaborations among researchers of diverse disciplines, such as the sciences and the arts, design and advanced manufacturing/technology, often lead to critical breakthroughs that have significant positive economic, environmental, and social impact. Federal funding opportunities through agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the NEA, and the Department of Commerce should encourage such cross-disciplinary collaboration.
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## EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- **Close gaps in access to arts education for all students.** Our nation's highest poverty schools have the least access to arts education. This equity gap denies students unique opportunities to succeed in school, work, and life. The recent bipartisan reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) affirms that a well-rounded education (as defined by law) is essential, and action by the U.S. Department of Education must ensure that all students have access to a complete education that includes the arts.
  - **Incorporate the arts into broader strategies for youth development at the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies.** The growing field of creative youth development intentionally integrates the arts, sciences, and humanities with youth development principles, sparking young people's creativity, and building critical learning and life skills that carry into adulthood.
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## VETERAN AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY

- **Advance the policy, practice, and quality use of the arts and creativity as tools for health in the military.** The health and well-being of veterans and active duty members of the military can be improved through the arts by increasing access to the proven benefits of creative arts therapies in military and veteran clinical settings.
  - **Provide greater access to the arts and arts-making for veterans, active duty military, and their families.** Artist-directed programs help provide a pathway for re-entry and re-integration into the workforce, while creating opportunities for service members and veterans to connect and engage with each other, their families and caregivers, and with the civilian community. Blue Star Museums and Blue Star Theatres are two such programs.
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## HEALTH AND HEALING

- **Support research, programs, and policies that leverage the healing power of the arts and creative therapies in health care.** The arts are proven to improve patients' physical, emotional, and cognitive health and well-being when put to use in clinical and community settings. Moreover, studies show a positive trend in the use of creative arts therapies in containing healthcare costs.
  - **Promote increased individual and community access to high quality arts programs that meet the needs of aging populations.** The arts help promote health and disease prevention, aid older adults in maintaining independence, and reduce the need for long-term nursing home care.
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## INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

- **Increase, evaluate, and publicly promote the use of the arts in diplomacy.** The State Department's support for U.S. artists and cultural institutions to travel abroad as citizen ambassadors should be significantly expanded to meet the full potential of the arts to advance U.S. diplomatic efforts. Likewise, increased opportunity for

exchanges that bring the world's arts and culture to American audiences would encourage efforts to promote cross-cultural understanding.

- **Improve the U.S. artist visa process at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the State Department.** Performances by guest artists from abroad are valuable cultural opportunities for U.S. artists and audiences. The process of obtaining U.S. visas currently presents extreme barriers, poses serious financial consequences for U.S. nonprofit arts organizations, and chills international cultural exchange.

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## TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

- **As new technologies enter the marketplace, protect the performing and media arts from burdensome costs and dangerous interference with wireless devices.** Many arts organizations are vulnerable to serious interference from new wireless products that will use the same channels as microphones, backstage communications, and devices for the hearing impaired. Our nation's nonprofit theatres, cinemas, arts presenters, orchestras, opera and dance companies, and similar users need the Federal Communications Commission to provide protection from interference.

- **Sustain noncommercial local media outlets.** Public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access channels reach communities that are often unreached or underserved by commercial media, and in some instances are the sole source for local news and cultural arts programming. In addition, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting serves hundreds of rural communities, which would otherwise lose their best (and sometimes only) source for arts and culture programming.

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## A COORDINATED APPROACH TO INTEGRATED ARTS POLICIES

**We urge the new Administration to call upon the expertise of the National Endowment for the Arts and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in identifying and developing new federal policies for the arts and culture that will support our nation's broader economic, domestic, and diplomatic strategies.**

Federal support for the NEA increases the accessibility and visibility of the arts by helping people develop, strengthen, and artistically express a sense of belonging within their communities and by fostering connections with other communities. A hallmark of the NEA has been to pioneer relationships with other federal agencies that recognize the potential of the arts to impact U.S. policy goals in the areas of science, health, defense, education, and community development.

Likewise, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) plays an important leadership and advisory role by serving as a visible arts platform for the Executive Office. Established by Executive Order 12367 in 1982 and renewed biennially ever since, the Committee is composed of the heads of twelve federal agencies with cultural programs: the NEA, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Department of Education, Department of the Interior, Department of the Treasury, Department of State, the Smithsonian Institution, Library of Congress, the General Services Administration, the Kennedy Center, and the National Gallery of Art. It also includes private citizens appointed by the President. The new Administration should re-examine and amend Executive Order 12367 to activate the full potential of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to identify and raise the visibility of further policy issues across federal agencies.

*This statement was written in September of 2016 and is endorsed by organizations listed on the following page. For further information, please contact [artspolicystatement@gmail.com](mailto:artspolicystatement@gmail.com).*

***“Advancing the Arts to Support National Policy Priorities”  
is endorsed by the following national organizations:***

Alliance for Community Media  
American Architectural Foundation  
American Alliance of Museums  
The American Art Therapy Association  
American Composers Forum  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Documentary, Inc.  
American Institute for Conservation of Historic &  
Artistic Works  
American Music Therapy Association  
Americans for the Arts  
Americans for the Arts Action Fund  
Arab American National Museum  
Art House Convergence  
Arts Schools Network  
Association for Theatre in Higher Education  
Association of American Cultures  
Association of Art Museum Directors  
Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design  
Association of Performing Arts Presenters  
CERF+  
Chamber Music America  
Chorus America  
Community of Literary Magazines and Presses  
The Creative Coalition  
Dance/USA  
The Drama League  
The Dramatists Guild of America  
Educational Theatre Association  
Fractured Atlas  
Future of Music Coalition  
Grantmakers in the Arts  
HABANA/HARLEM®  
International Council of Fine Arts Deans  
International Documentary Association  
International Society for the Performing Arts  
ITVS  
League of American Orchestras  
Lincoln Center Education  
LitNet  
Literary Technical Assistance Program  
Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts  
in Education  
Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation  
Music Teachers National Association  
National Alliance for Musical Theatre  
National Art Education Association  
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies  
National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures  
National Basketry Organization  
National Center for Creative Aging  
National Council for the Traditional Arts  
National Dance Education Organization  
National Guild for Community Arts Education  
National Music Council  
National New Play Network  
National Performance Network /  
Visual Artists Network  
Native Public Media  
Network of Ensemble Theaters  
New England Foundation for the Arts  
New Music USA  
North American Drama Therapy Association  
OPERA America  
Performing Arts Alliance  
The Recording Academy  
Small Press Distribution  
Theatre Communications Group  
Theatre Development Fund  
U.S. Department of Arts and Culture  
Vision Maker Media  
WESTAF  
Women of Color in the Arts  
Young Audiences Arts for Learning