2022 National Arts Action Summit (NAAS) Highlights

The Americans for the Arts 2022 National Arts Action Summit took place virtually on March 28-30. Eight policy briefings focused on FY 2023 Appropriations and several Creative Economy bills pending before Congress. To reduce all financial barriers of accessibility, no registration fee was charged allowing 800 registrants to participate from 47 states and over 200 organizational partners, at the national, regional, state, and local levels.

Americans for the Arts welcomed the participation of members of Congress and arts leaders in the Welcome Session. Featured appearances included:

- National Endowment for the Arts Chair Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson
- House Small Business Committee Chair Nydia Velázquez (D-NY-07)
- House Education & Labor Committee member and sponsor of “Arts Education for All Act” Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR-01)
- Congressional Arts Caucus member and “Saving Transit Arts Resources (STAR) Act” sponsor Representative Alma Adams (D-NC-12)
- “Comprehensive Resources for Entrepreneurs in the Arts to Transform the Economy (CREATE) Act of 2022” sponsors Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12)

Each session was recorded and is available for free at ArtsU.AmericansForTheArts.org/NAAS-2022-Home

NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson Speaks at NAAS

New Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson made one of her first public addresses at the virtual Americans for the Arts National Arts Action Summit on March 28, 2022. Below is an excerpt of her inspiring speech.

"Engagement in the arts cultivates curiosity, empathy, imagination, the ability to hold nuance, and individual and collective agency. Engagement in the arts is critical to our health and well-being. It is also critical to helping us get unstuck...there's some guiding premises that have informed my work over the course of my career, and these, along with other inputs, will inform specific programmatic priorities as well.

One idea is that creativity is a natural impulse and community asset from which to build, and that communities are not blank slates. Some of the most valuable assets that exist in communities are actually people's imagination and their creative impulse. This is core, foundational, critical to who we say we want to be. While the Arts Endowment certainly plays an important role in bringing art from other places to many communities around the country, some of our most important work is also in lifting up and strengthening cultural assets that are already in communities, helping to cultivate and advance creativity and imagination in place.

A second idea is that cultural self-determination is a crucial dimension of equity. That is the ability to make sense of the world on one's own terms, to tell one's own story, to dream, imagine, assert aesthetically. This is foundational to our American ethos, and access to the resources and opportunities for arts engagement is a crucial dimension of an equitable community."

Read the full remarks of Chair Jackson's thoughtful ideas at www.ArtsActionFund.org/ChairJacksonNAASRemarks.
I am pleased to announce the addition of four new members to the Arts Action Fund Board of Directors: Nolen V. Bivens, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts; Patrick Brien, executive director of the Riverside Arts Council; Colleen Jennings-Roggensack, vice president for cultural affairs for Arizona State University and executive director of ASU Gammage; and Felix Sanchez, chairman and co-founder of the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts.

These four tremendous leaders each bring a diverse range of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds to the collective voice of the Americans for the Arts Action Fund. You can read their full bios on our website at www.ArtsActionFund.org/NewBoardMembers.

With our new board members officially added to the board, they all unanimously voted to ratify the membership-endorsed 2022 Arts Policy Vote Platform. Prior to the board vote, the AAF members cast their votes on the platform positions for six weeks. Based on the membership voting overwhelmingly in favor of the platform, the board of directors adopted the policies as its legislative agenda for the year. Read the 2022 Policy Platform at www.ArtsActionFund.org/AAFBoardRatifies2022PolicyVote.

On March 15, 2022, President Biden signed a $1.5 trillion spending omnibus package passed by Congress on March 12. The bill’s passage comes after five months of negotiations between Democrats and Republicans over how to fund the federal government through September 30, 2022.

Additionally, after a decade-long ban of congressionally-directed spending known as "earmarks," Congress allocated an additional $8 billion to hometown projects in this Omnibus bill. Americans for the Arts estimates that over $300 million were specifically directed to arts and culture projects. A spreadsheet of all the earmarks is available for users to search for arts and culture-related earmarks. bit.ly/OmniEarmarks22

The chart below highlights key arts-related federal funding included in the FY22 Omnibus bill, along with the progress points in the congressional cycle. Thanks to the arts advocacy efforts by members like you, significant increases in funding were realized this year.
New federal economic data about FY 2020 are rolling in and, as expected, they reflect an arts and culture industry hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic compared to overall economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the nation’s arts and culture sector (nonprofit, commercial, education) shrank from $930 billion to $877 billion between 2019 and 2020—the first decrease since the Great Recession. That 5.8% decrease was also significantly worse than the overall 3.4% contraction of the U.S. economy.

According to the BEA, few sectors received a greater economic shock than the performing arts. “Performing arts presenters and performing arts companies joined oil drilling/exploration and air transportation as the steepest-declining areas of the U.S. economy in 2020. After adjusting for inflation, the value added by performing arts presenters (including festivals) fell by nearly 73% between 2019 and 2020.”

Arts employment also saw larger than average decreases. The number of arts wage and salary workers dropped 11.6% from a pre-pandemic figure of 5.2 million in 2019 to 4.6 million nearly double the rate of job losses nationally.

As the arts sector works its way back, it is worth noting that, even with these decreases, arts and culture still represented 4.2% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020—a larger share of the economy than transportation, agriculture, and utilities.

That the BEA even measures arts and culture production in the U.S. is itself an indication of the important role of the arts in building a healthy economy and ensuring our global competitiveness. At $877 billion, it remains a much a larger industry than is widely understood. bit.ly/BEA2022Data

FY 2022 State Arts Funding

This year was a record year for funding of the nation's state arts agencies with an all-time high of $820.8 million in state appropriations for FY 2022. This is up from 100% from 2021, and includes one-time CARES Act and American Rescue Plan funds to states that were partially reallocated to the arts.

To see the full chart of all state arts agency funding produced by the National Assembly of Arts Agencies, visit www.ArtsActionFund.org/StateArtsAgency2022Funding.

Why the Arts Matter Factsheets for ALL 50 States

In collaboration with state arts agencies and state arts advocacy organizations, the Arts Action Fund has successfully updated its Why the Arts Matter factsheets for all 50 states! Find your state’s factsheet now and see the impact of the arts & culture sector in your state. www.ArtsActionFund.org/StateFactsheets.

Arts Research Update

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It's midterm election season. The Arts Action Fund is calling on all members to share the newly updated 2022 Federal Candidate Arts Survey with federal candidates running for office this year. The Federal Candidate Arts Survey helps us determine which candidates would support the Arts Action Fund membership's newly adopted 2022 Arts Policy Platform. If candidates support our platform positions, they then become eligible to receive political contributions from our Arts Action Fund Political Action Committee (PAC).

Coming soon: We will have a dedicated resource page on our website of filled-out Candidate Arts Surveys, so that you can learn more about the candidates you plan to vote for. ArtsActionFund.org/FederalCandidateArtsSurvey