



Update

Greetings!

Welcome to the April 2016 **Advocacy Update**--the latest news about federal and state issues related to the arts. [Read this blog post](#) to learn about Vermont issues and specific steps you can take.

Federal Update

The National Endowment for the Arts plans to announce appropriations for each state arts agency in early May. The Vermont Arts Council anticipates a funding increase that compares favorably to our peers. It is this increase that drives the Council's first item on the state advocacy agenda (below).

State Update

2016 state advocacy agenda

1. State appropriation (increase to \$680,000 to match the approved federal increase). The House Appropriations Committee sent its budget recommendation to the Senate **without** the governor's proposed increase. The Arts Council is working closely with the Senate Appropriations Committee. If the two committees' recommendations agree, a figure goes forward for passage. If they differ, the item goes to a Joint Conference Committee for final recommendation.

2. Bill to establish the Vermont Creative Network. Bill [H. 868](#), the large proposed economic bill, makes its way through a host of house and senate committees. The portion of the bill addressing the establishment of the Vermont Creative Network has come before the Commerce and Economic Development, Ways and Means, and Appropriations Committees in the House, and before the Finance Committee in the Senate. Funding is still part of the measure. We expect that a final vote will take place late in the legislative session (end of April or early May).

3. Adoption of the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) by the Agency of Education. As reported last month, **Success!** The State Board of Education adopted the National Core Arts Standards for academic year 2017-18.

Other issues

When is an independent contractor an independent contractor or an employee? This question is being pursued in the House Economic Development Committee through [H. 867](#). Initially crafted to respond to concerns in the construction industry, it has become apparent that the issue involves other sectors, including the creative sector. Creative entrepreneurs, performers, designers, directors, and others could be affected by this legislation. Arriving at a workable resolution of the related issues may take years. Please feel free to share your thoughts on this issue with [Alex Aldrich](#).

Vermont Arts Advocacy Day was Tuesday, March 29. Thank you to everyone who participated!

- Harwood High School senior **Anna Van Dine** opened the legislative day with a recitation of [Monet Refuses the Operation](#) by Liesel Mueller.
- While we cannot track any personal phone calls you might have made to your elected officials, we know that **nearly 200 electronic messages** arrived in legislators' inboxes. Good work! Thanks to those who used the Council's Action Center.
- Over fifty Vermonters responded to a simple questionnaire that allowed us to build **Arts Advocacy Day Collector's Cards**. Almost 1,000 cards were distributed during the day.
- In the State House, we were greeted by a number of **arts-friendly supporters** who came to the State House to speak with legislators.

Policy research agenda. The Arts Council continues to:

- explore potential roles for the former Office of Creative Economy.
- research possible creative sector business incentives.
- understand the benefits of placing an arts content specialist at the Agency of Education (AOE).
- develop arts-appropriate language for inclusion into [Act 186](#), the [Results Based Accountability](#) (RBA) law.

It's true: every voice makes a difference!

All best--



Zon Eastes

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