



Update

Greetings!

National Update

Appropriations

Currently there is no budget for the federal government for the fiscal year just entered. The U.S. House passed a bill that included funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) at \$145M for FY2018; the Senate funding bill is not yet finalized. Until a budget is passed, the government must fund its operation through continuing resolutions. If the House and Senate approve different funding levels, a joint resolution between the two houses will settle on a single figure. There remains a possibility the Senate will approve current-level funding for both agencies (at \$150M). It appears most likely that the NEA and NEH will be funded at \$145M, a decrease from the previous year. December 8 is the deadline to pass a continuing resolution.

Charitable Giving Tax Policy

The Republican Party budget framework retains the charitable giving provision. Many members of Congress, however, seem unaware that in proposing legislation to double the standard deduction, the percentage of American taxpayers who itemize will drop from 33% to 5%. This threatens the nonprofit sector and could yield a \$13 billion **loss**. If an alternate proposal - the universal deduction - were enacted, it could yield a \$4 billion **increase** to the nonprofit sector. Universal deduction legislation has been introduced and appears to be moving through the normal processes.

State News

Appropriations

In Vermont, the governor proposes a budget to the legislature in the first weeks of the year. The initial step in this process requires that state departments and designated agencies submit level-funded budgets to the department of finance and management. That step, as completed by Council staff last week, included a memo intended to open the door for conversation about why level funding is not acceptable. Executive Director Karen Mittelman will meet with the budget office in early November.

**Creative Network Summit
November 8-9**

Vermonters with a stake in the health and advancement of our creative sector should plan to gather at the State House for this two-day convening.

Policy development will be a focus: What are the key issues facing the sector that, if acted upon, could really make a difference? For you? In your community? In the state? Discussions will result in identifying and developing the critical policy issues to present to the governor and legislature at the start of the 2018 legislative session.



Confirmed speakers include: Lt. Governor David Zuckerman; Senator Tim Ashe, President Pro Tem; Ted Brady, deputy secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Wendy Knight, commissioner, Department of Marketing and Tourism; Paul Costello, executive director, Vermont Council on Rural Development. Diane Derby, field representative, Senator Patrick Leahy.

[The full schedule](#) includes plenary sessions to inspire and affirm. Workshops are offered in two areas: working toward common language and case studies for collective engagement. Join the conversation. [Register here](#).

What You Can Do

Connect with your [elected officials](#). The most effective advocacy efforts are face-to-face: stories supported by clear data. Build an open, direct relationship. Invite your elected officials to local/regional group meetings - forums, discussions, arts events, or even breakfast. Contact [Zon Eastes](#) for ideas and contacts in your area.

Be in touch. Every voice makes a difference!

All best --

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zon Eastes".

Zon Eastes
Director of Outreach and Advancement
Vermont Arts Council
136 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6001
802.828.5423 (voice and relay calls welcome)