



Update

Greetings!

Welcome to advocacy season! We look forward to working with you to advance the arts to the center of Vermont communities.

Vermont Advocacy Agenda

The Arts Council has built its 2017 advocacy agenda upon strategic planning, constituent input, and research into the larger Vermont context. This three-point agenda will succeed insofar as your voices become an active part of the process. We invite your energetic participation.

1. Increase the Arts Council appropriation from \$637,307 to \$1,137,000.
2. Insert the arts and creativity into [Act 186](#).
3. Ensure the arts are a part of every Vermont student's education.

Update

1. In late 2016, the Arts Council presented a proposal to the budget office and to the outgoing Governor's office. We anticipate Governor Scott's budget address, scheduled for January 24.

Current work: Preparations for House and Senate Appropriations Committee hearings.

Upcoming steps: Connections with you about direct advocacy actions to ensure passage.

2. Act 186 is important legislation that seeks to increase state agency accountability by establishing population-level outcomes and indicators and implementing program-level performance measures. The Council will define measurable ways in which the arts, culture, and creativity contribute to Vermont's highest-level outcomes.

Current work: Studying appropriate bills for insertion of arts and culture language.

Upcoming steps: Connections with bill authors to suggest amendments.

3. The Council is working with the Agency of Education in the context of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Vermont Act 77, and Vermont Act 46.

Current work: Strategy meetings with a coalition of arts education voices, including the Proficiency Based Learning Team at the Agency of Education, Community Engagement Lab, and VSA Vermont.

Upcoming steps: Respond to input opportunity on proposed ESSA bill. You can respond via the public input process on this [ESSA webpage](#). The comment period closes February 10.

Advocacy tools

To help you prepare for arts advocacy season, we encourage you to become familiar with a few advocacy tools.

- The Arts Council [advocacy webpage](#) posts proven advocacy actions and links to key resources.
- You can connect to the [Action Center](#) from the advocacy webpage. This powerful tool enables you to respond speedily to posted advocacy issues, write an email to a particular elected official (from your town representative to the president), learn more about these elected officials, and locate particular legislation.
- Use the [Vermont General Assembly webpage](#) to stay abreast of daily legislative activity. You can find legislators, submitted and enacted bill progress, and calendars for committee meetings.

National update

On January 20, the Trump administration assumes leadership of the White House. The 115th Congress opened session on January 3. While the new presidency introduces many questions, we do know that President Obama recommended an increase of nearly \$2 million for both the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) (NEH). The Vermont Arts Council is in close connection with our national leadership agencies and advocacy peers.

Vermont Arts Advocacy Day

Mark your calendars now! **Friday, February 3** is Vermont Arts Advocacy Day at the State House in Montpelier. It's our day to connect with state legislators about support for the arts in Vermont. While plans for the day are still underway, we will invite you to connect with your legislator at the State House or virtually via email. Watch for subsequent messages.

National Arts Advocacy Day

The Vermont Arts Council will travel to Washington, D.C. for [National Arts Advocacy Day](#) on March 21. This gathering brings hundreds of people from across the nation to speak for the value of the arts. Hosted by [Americans for the Arts](#), the days are packed with opportunities to connect with national arts leaders and Vermont's elected representatives, to strategize with peers, and to dig deep into arts-related issues at the national level.

Be in touch. Every voice makes a difference!

All best,

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

Zon Eastes

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