



Update

Greetings!

Review: Vermont Advocacy Agenda

The Arts Council is advancing its 2017 advocacy agenda. This three-point plan 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 \$675,307 to \$1,175,000.
2. Insert the arts and creativity into [Act 186](#).
3. Ensure the arts are a part of every Vermont student's education.

National Update

The status of funding for the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA) remains in question. The budget currently before Congress (prepared by President Obama) includes an increase of \$2 million; President Trump is expected to present a first draft budget later this month. Incoming presidents traditionally offer an abbreviated budget (called a "skinny budget"), followed by a more complete budget later in the session. Seeing the President's proposal will be the first signal of his intentions for arts support.

Meanwhile, advocacy efforts around the country heat up.

1. [Americans for the Arts](#) (AFTA) recently created an [Arts Mobilization Center](#) that provides the up-to-date resources for addressing current advocacy issues.
2. The [Arts Action Fund](#), the nation's only PAC for the arts, operates direct a. Join this organization to receive periodic messages and action alerts.
3. Advocates from across the nation continue to strategize together on monthly conference calls (Vermont is on these calls).

National Arts Advocacy Day

A contingent of arts advocates from Vermont will travel to Washington, D.C. for National Arts Advocacy Day, March 20-21. Your participation is encouraged as well! On March 21, Vermont advocates will visit the offices of Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders and Representative Peter Welch. Read about [National Arts Advocacy Day](#) and contact [Zon Eastes](#) with questions about the event.

State Update

Thanks to all of you who took part – in Montpelier and at home – in Vermont Arts Advocacy Day, Friday, February 3! We created a small pinball arcade complete with advocacy messages, bells and whistles to enliven our message in the Card Room. Among others, Representatives Philip Hooper, D-Orange-Washington-Addison and Sam Young, D-Orelans-Caledonia (pictured) took a moment to explore arts advocacy messages in "super share mode." On other fronts, many email messages from across Vermont appeared in legislators' inboxes. The day escalated awareness of the value of art and creativity in Vermont. Good work!



To date, the Arts Council has testified before the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee and hosted an information session for members of the [Legislative Arts Caucus](#) (LAC). Members of the LAC have helped us hone our message for upcoming testimonies. Today, the Council team appears before the House Appropriations Committee and expects to speak with the Senate Appropriations Committee after the break in early March.

What You Can Do

The best advocacy efforts are made face-to-face: your stories supported by clear data. That sort of effort works best throughout the year. Build a relationship. Direct contact is not always possible; other ways of connecting are also important:

- 1) join advocacy campaigns. This can include going to the Council's [Action Center](#) to direct a prepared email message to your elected officials. We know that these campaigns can make a real difference in decision-making.
- 2) phone your elected officials. Be prepared to speak briefly (to your legislator or to voicemail) about your issue. You can find your legislator's contact information at the Arts Council's [Action Center](#) (use the upper right hand box: Find Officials).
- 3) email your elected officials. Aim to be clear and direct (legislators are very busy). You can also find email contact information at the [Action Center](#).
- 4) invite your elected officials to local/regional group meetings – forums, discussions, even breakfast. These are especially effective outside the legislative session. Contact [Zon Eastes](#) for ideas and contacts in your area.

Be in touch. Every voice makes a difference!

All best--

Zon Eastes
Director of Outreach and Advancement