



Update

Greetings!

National Update

Reminder: The federal fiscal year begins each October 1. If current continuing resolutions persist, funding for the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA), [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) (NEH), the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#) (CPB), and the [Institute of Museums and Library Services](#) is secure through September 2018.

This current continuing resolution (by which the government is temporarily funded) expires April 28. Until the federal government has a working budget for this year, there is little space for future-year budget discussions. Our national advocacy partners tell us that we may not see indication for next year until summer or even in the early fall.

There is growing bi-partisan support for the four cultural agencies. We track developments and will keep you informed of potential, directed steps you can take. Meanwhile, the national media conversation about support for these agencies has been robust. We encourage you to use social media to keep the conversation moving.

National Arts Advocacy Day

A spirited contingent of Vermonters travelled to Washington, D.C. to participate in [National Arts Advocacy Day](#) (March 20-21). Hat tips to Allison Coyle Carroll (and son Aidan) from Middlebury and Sara Coffey (and daughter Izzy) from Guilford! We attended briefing sessions and heard the latest research in preparation for three important congressional visits. Vermonters who care about the role of the arts and creativity are well represented by our Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders, as well as by our Representative Peter Welch. Among the many arts-related issues facing the nation, we talked with staffers about these key issues:

1. Support for the National Endowment for the Arts with an appropriation of \$155M
2. Support arts education grant programs at the U.S. Department of Education with an appropriation of \$30M
3. Support tax policy encouraging charitable gifts to support community access to the arts
4. Support improvement of the VISA process for foreign artists

We also spoke about a range of other topics including the [CREATE Act](#), about arts and infrastructure, and arts and health.



State Update

Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Alex Aldrich is stepping down as of Friday, April 14. Alex has led the Vermont Arts Council for 20 years, and has served as the state's arts lobbyist. The Arts Council board has named Teri Bordenave as interim director. For the remaining weeks of this legislative session, Zon Eastes, supported by board chair Bob Stannard, a former state legislator, will step in.

1. Arts Council appropriation. The Arts Council testified before the **Senate Appropriations Committee** on Friday, March 31. The Committee is now in the budget review period and we expect recommendations any day. The general tone of the budget process is serious and measured. If the House and Senate Committee recommendations are the same, that figure moves into the budget for final approval. **Send a pre-written (but editable) [letter](#) to your state Senator. Encourage them to speak with members of the Senate Appropriations Committee about increased funding.**

2. Insertion of arts and culture language into Act 186. Act 186 is the bill calling for indicators and measures (Results-Based Accountability [RBA] language) in support of eight broad outcomes. The Arts Council continues in strategic planning mode, developing strategies and language intended to contribute to the state's population-level outcomes. Closing stages of this planning process include board approval for general direction, a public input period, final edits, and then, final approval by the Council board.

3. Ensure the arts are a part of every Vermont student's education. On April 3, the Agency of Education (AOE) submitted its [state education proposal](#), in alliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Council staff meets regularly with staff from the AOE.



What You Can Do

Research indicates that the most effective advocacy efforts are face-to-face: stories supported by clear data. And these efforts work throughout the year, not only during a legislative session. Build a relationship. Direct contact is not always possible; other ways of connecting are also important:

1. Join advocacy campaigns. Get engaged in national issues at the [Arts Action Fund](#). Watch for state actions at the Council's [Action Center](#)
2. Contact your elected officials by phone or email. By phone, be prepared to speak briefly about your issue. In either case, aim to be clear and direct (legislators are very busy). You can find your legislator's contact information at the Arts Council's [Action Center](#) (use the upper right hand box: Find Officials)
3. 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--



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