



To: County Arts Network Members

From: Jay Dick, Senior Director of State and Local Government Affairs

Re: Public Partnerships Quarterly Update

Date: April 16, 2019

As we close out the first quarter of 2019, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on Americans for the Arts' Public Partner Activities.

But, before I get into this quarter's activities, I wanted to let you know a little bit more about Americans for the Arts broader **strategic partnership program**.

As you might know, Americans for the Arts, like any national nonprofit advocacy and research organization, is a complex, multifaceted smorgasbord of programs, activities, and goals. Our modest number of employees not only work to make fundamental changes to society using the arts and culture, but we also work to change how people view the arts and culture by getting them to recognize its value to the economy, education, and to the health and wellbeing of our nation and its communities. For a nonprofit of our size, we often do the work or see successes similar to much larger nonprofits or even for-profit companies.

We owe this success to our members and the thousands of arts organizations across the country who work with us to accomplish our goals. But, there is another group of organizations that Americans for the Arts partners with who also help us accomplish our goals. These organizations are not arts-centric groups, but they do see the value of the arts and culture in accomplishing their goals. We call this group of organizations our [Strategic Partners](#).

Americans for the Arts' Strategic Partners normally fall into one of several categories: [Business/Private Sector Partners](#), [Government/Public Partners](#), [Educational Partners](#), and [Military Partners](#).

If you would like to learn more about our Strategic Program, please check out my recent ArtsBlog [post](#).

The United States Conference of Mayors



Recipients of the 2019 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards pose for a group photo at The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) Winter Conference. L-R: Artist Kate Raudenbush; USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran; Reno, NV Mayor Hillary Schieve; Burnsville, MN Mayor Elizabeth Kautz; Bloomington, IN Mayor John Hamilton; Carmel, IN Mayor James Brainard; Boston, MA Mayor Marty Walsh; Artist Michael Bivins; Charleston, SC Mayor John Tecklenburg; Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert Lynch; Artist Jonathan Green and Columbia, SC Mayor Steve Benjamin.

Since 1997, **Americans for the Arts** and our longest-running partner, **The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)** have presented our Public Leadership in the Arts Awards to Mayors who have demonstrated outstanding support for the arts and culture. Continuing this tradition, we hosted the Mayors Arts Breakfast at the USCM's Winter Meeting which was held in DC in January. At this breakfast, we presented Reno, NV **Mayor Hillary Schieve** and Bloomington, IN **Mayor John Hamilton** with our awards for local arts leadership while Utah **Governor Gary Herbert** was honored with our state leadership award. Further, we honored three artists for their work in advancing the arts and culture through their work with our Citizen Artist awards. Those recipients were: Artist **Kate Raudenbush** who is best known for her public art work at Burning Man; South Carolina based Artist **Jonathan Green**, a highly recognized visual master for capturing the positive aspects of American and African American southern cultures, history and traditions; and Boston based Artist **Michael L. Bivins** of Boys2Men for using the arts and culture to work with at risk youth.

For more information, please contact **Nina Ozlu Tunceli**, our Chief Counsel of Government and Public Affairs at ntunceli@artsusa.org.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will participate in USCM's Annual meeting in Honolulu in June.

National Lt. Governors Association



Lt. Governors pose for a group photo at their Federal-State Relations Meeting.

The National Lt. Governors Association held their Federal-State Relations Meeting here in DC March 27-29 with a record 32 Lt. Governors attending. Of this total, eight were first time attendees. Those Lt. Governors were from: Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, and the Virgin Islands. When you combine these eight with the first-time attendees from their December meeting along with the carryover Lt Governors who were not elected this past November, I have met 43 of the nation's Lt. Governors out of the total of 54 (states and territories) or around 80%. Obviously, some I know better than others, but all 43 have seen me, heard about Americans for the Arts, listened to me address the group at NLGA meetings and received a packet of our information. That said, the other 11 who have never attended an NLGA meeting have also probably seen our name in NLGA emails but don't really know us.

The group also approved a resolution authorizing the continuation of our Public Leadership in the Arts Award and our partnership with NLGA on the State Military and Veterans Arts and Humanities Initiative. The resolution also contained language about the value of the arts and culture to the economy.



I had the opportunity to speak at their meeting about our NEH sponsored State Military and Veterans Arts and Humanities Initiative where I updated the Lt. Governors and their staff about the Initiative, that we will be selected three pilot states, and what we hope to accomplish.

Thanks to Illinois **Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton** for taking this photo and tweeting: Thanks to @JayAFTA of @Americans4Arts for sharing innovative ideas for arts in the military to address the health, healing and well-being of our service members! #military #arts #health

We will also be working with Lt. Gov Stratton on an ad hoc State Military and Veterans Arts and Humanities Initiative in her state as our Development team has identified an Illinois based foundation who has requested that we submit a grant proposal. I have invited other Lt. Governors to think about foundations that we might be able to work with in their state and to communicate that information to me.

Again, this was a successful meeting from our perspective, one where Americans for the Arts received outsized recognition than the other corporate sponsors and where I made a few new connections outside of Lt. Governors and their staffs. Those are: Dan Horning, Associate Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House and Melissa Glynn, Assistant Secretary, Office of Enterprise Integration, US Department of Veterans Affairs. Sec. Glynn spoke about how the VA is changing how they provide health care to their veterans. I chatted to her about our Arts and Military programs with which she was familiar.

I was also able to say hello to David Cleary, Chief of Staff for Senator Lamar Alexander (Chair of the Education Committee and a Member of Interior Appropriations Committee) who spoke on education policy. I just thanked David for the Senator's support and reminded him of our ask for \$40 million for Arts Education Grant Programs at the Department of Education. As **Narric Rome**, our VP of Government Affairs mentioned, it is nice to make this connection because David will see that Americans for the Arts is involved in many facets of government relations, not just working with Congress.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will attend the NLGA July meeting in Dover, DE and identify the three pilot states for our NLGA Arts Initiative.

National Association of Counties

In a brilliant- or maybe insane – luck of scheduling in March, the NACo Legislative Conference was held at the same time as the National Arts Action Summit (NAAS), which made for a long weekend, but some great synergies.



The arts were out in force on Sunday, when the NACo Arts and Culture Commission met along with the Creative Counties Forum.

Up first was the Arts and Culture Commission which met from 1-2 pm. The topic was: Revitalizing Community Through the Arts. Stuart Eisenberg, the Executive Director of the Hyattsville Community Development Corporation spoke on Arts Districts and how they assist with economic development. The random thing was I mentioned that I was recently interviewed by Bisnow, an online publication for commercial developers about the same topic. Turns out, he was also interviewed for that same [article](#). The tweet of the day from this session was my quote/ title of the article where I stated “No Longer Washers And Dryers: Developers Put Arts Districts On the Amenity List.



I then provided an update to the group. I spent some time talking about our Social Impact Explorer (and gave them the hard copy version), a recap on the arts and the economy (AEP5, BEA) a little about Public Arts, our Ipsos poll and our work to protect the NEA and in response to

a question, what we were doing to engage presidential candidates.



Next up, **Ruby Lopez Harper**, our Director of Local Arts Services and I, along with NACo, planned the Creative Counties Forum which was a one year check in on the NEA funded program where we identified seven counties from across the county and have worked with them for the past year to help them use the arts to solve their unique problems. After an opening panel by NEA and Art of the Rural representatives, the seven counties presented an update on their programs and goals. The group then broke into smaller groups for more in-depth conversations before being brought back together for a final round of discussion (led by me) and then a wrap up (led by Ruby).

While we started out the day with about 115 people, the Creative Counties Forum was a little smaller but I was pleasantly surprised the number of non-creative county participated who stuck around and actively participated.



Before the meeting, I let NACo know that any Arts and Culture Commission member could get a Nancy Hanks ticket. NACo ended up making this the commission's official arts event for the conference! In exchange for a business card, I provided Nancy Hanks tickets to any participant who requested them – more on that below. Pictured with me is **Commissioner Shelly Taub** of Oakland County, MI who is the chair of the NACo Arts and Culture Commission standing next to one of several arts posters that were sprinkled through out the NACo conference.

NACo Board Meeting

In a fortuitous set of circumstances, the Arts and Culture Commission meeting room was next door to the NACo Board of Directors meeting space. As I had a stack of Nancy Hanks Tickets, I snuck out of the Arts meeting and went over to the NACo Board meeting and provided NACo Ex. Director Matt Chase the tickets to give out to his board. About an hour later, we had a break at the Arts meeting and I stuck my head back into the NACo board meeting just as **NACo Board President Greg Cox**, (a supervisor from San Diego County) was announcing this to the group. Matt saw me standing in the back of the room and invited me forward to speak to the Board about the Nancy Hanks lecture. I subsequently gave out around 50 Nancy Hanks tickets total and I saw a bunch of County Commissioners at the Kennedy Center all of which were raving about the event.

Coming up: NACo will host its 2019 Annual Conference in Las Vegas this July where Americans for the Arts will participate in their Arts and Culture Committee meeting. Further, we will continue to work with them on the Creative County Initiative.

National Conference of State Legislatures

At last years NCSL's Fall Forum, Americans for the Arts, in partnership with NCSL presented California State **Senator Ben Allen** with our Public Leadership in the Arts Award for state arts leadership. As the Senator's wife gave birth two weeks before the award was presented, he was unable to accept the award in person. We have been working with the Senator's office to arrange for the award to be re-presented in Sacramento which happened last week.

With the assistance of Senator Allen's Office, Julie Baker of Californians for the Arts, Joe Landen of the California Alliance for Arts Education and Anne Brown Crawford of the California Arts Council, we put together a nice day of activities to not only honor Senator Allen but bring attention to the arts and culture in California. Joining me for the day was NCSL's Deputy Executive Director Nancy Rhyme. Her

presence added another level of prestige to the events given NCSL's relationship with the California Legislature. Further, these events also helped NCSL with some of their goals regarding California, so this was a win-win for everyone and also deepened our relationship with NCSL.



The day began with Nancy and myself being invited onto the California Senate Floor to be formally introduced to the Senate. Basically, what this meant was we stood up between the two columns at the main entrance to Senate while Senator Ben Allen read a little speech about NCSL and Americans for the Arts. After we were introduced, we were joined by Julie, Joe and several other Senators for this photo.

We were able to hang out on the Senate Floor for the entire 90 minute session and visit with various members.



Next, we adjourned to Senator Allen's office where we were joined by other arts supporters to re-present the award and have a nice dialogue with the Senator.

After the meeting, Nancy suggested to me that we do some press on this event. I told her that we originally did a press release last December, but I was open to her suggestions and she thought

that a NCSL Blog post might be nice. I mentioned to her that I agreed, but that NCSL's policy was not to accept outside submissions for their blog post. (This is a policy that has long stymied me from getting NCSL to publish anything of ours). Nancy thought that this event would not violate their policy (and we talked about future ways Americans for the Arts could get blog posts published). So, we were able to provide NCSL with the information and they tweeted out these two tweets which linked back to their blog.

Congrats to CA State Sen. @BenAllenCA in receiving the Public Leadership in the Arts Award @Americans4Arts <http://ow.ly/3xY730onyL3>

CA State Sen. @BenAllenCA receives national arts award for effectively leading the arts advancement movement in his region @Americans4Arts <http://ow.ly/3xY730onyL3>



Next, NCSL and AFTA hosted an evening reception with Sen. Allen and several other Senators and Assembly Members.

I should note that NCSL's longtime Executive Director, Bill Pound is retiring and they are currently involved in a search for their new leader. Nancy informed me that she is one of the finalists for the position, which makes sense as she is their Deputy Ex. Director. So, by partnering on this trip, Americans for the Arts has now strengthened our personal relationship with Nancy who could very well be their new leader and has established a couple new paths to deepen our partnership.

On a different topic, I continue to work with NCSL on this year's convention panel topics. While not completely final, it appears Americans for the Arts will arrange for an Arts and Health panel at their Legislative Summit in Nashville. This topic builds upon past topics as the arts and the economy, arts education, arts in justice reform, and arts in the military. For each new topic, new legislators are exposed to Americans for the Arts and how the arts and culture contribute to a healthy society.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will be working with NCSL planning future panel discussions.

Joint National Conference of State Legislatures & National Association of Counties

Continuing last year's separate involvement of NACo and NCSL in the National Arts Action Summit (NAAS), Americans reached out to both organizations this year to arrange for joint programming.

NACo and NCSL at NAAS Training

Building off of the success of last year's National Arts Action Summit town hall style conversation/training with former Massachusetts **Senate President Stan Rosenberg**, we arranged for another town hall with both NACo and NCSL representatives. Representing NACo was **Commissioner Shelley Taub** of Oakland County, MI, who is the Chair of the NACo Arts and Culture Commission. Representing NCSL was Virginia State **Senator Adam Ebbin**. Both did a great job of interacting with the 110 or so who attended the session. I think one of the best moments of the event was at the very end when I revealed that Sen. Ebbin was a liberal Democrat and Commissioner Taub a Conservative Republican. That was met with some stunned looks but also helped to illustrate our point about how the arts are bipartisan.

NACo and NCSL at the Hill Breakfast Kickoff

Again, building off of last year, when then NACo Arts and Culture **Commission Chair Kay Cashion** spoke at the kickoff, we invited back Commissioner Taub and Senator Ebbin to make the state and local connection to our advocates. I thought each did a good job and hopefully we can continue to include our partners in the breakfast. Further, Sen Ebbin and NCSL DC Office Director Molly Ramsdell attended a House leadership luncheon. From my perspective, highlighting the Commissioner (NACo) and Senator (NCSL) helped with our relationship to our partners where we are able to provide something to their members/staff that they cannot provide themselves. This leads to a more symbiotic relationship.

National League of Cities

No major news for this edition for NLC

Coming up: NLC is having their Cities Summit in San Antonio this November. I continue to work with NCL leadership to establish an award honoring a city councilperson in 2019.

ICMA (City Managers Association)

No major news for this edition for NLC

Coming up: I will be working with ICMA to establish an award for a city/county manager.

National Governors Association

I am pleased to highlight the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practice new action guide, **Rural Prosperity through the Arts and Creative Sector: A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States**. This report was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) to give governors a road map on how to use the arts to help with rural economies. You can download the report [here](#).

Coming up: We will work with NGA to create more opportunities to partner together.

Thanks for reading and never hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.

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