



To: County Arts Network Members

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

Re: Public Partnerships Mid-Year Update

Date: August 9, 2021

After over a year and a half, life is tentatively starting to return to some sense of “normal,” although I don’t think anyone really knows what “normal” really looks like anymore. Alas, with the delta and other variants starting to emerge, we might find ourselves taking a few steps backward as we try to fully resume our lives.

Throughout the pandemic, Americans for the Arts continued our work with our public partners, albeit in augmented ways. Talking with some of my peers in other industries, we all agreed that while we were able to continue our work with existing contacts, getting to know and educate new elected officials was very difficult. This is just another reason why I am pleased that Americans for the Arts works with the various public partners as we are able to have them, as our proxy, push out information about the arts and culture. I will give you a couple examples in the various partner sections.

One of the overarching parts of our work with the various partners is around the CARES and ARP recovery programs. Billions of dollars were distributed to states and local governments with great flexibility on how to use these funds. We have been working to educate elected officials and other key decision makers on allocating some of these funds to the arts and culture to allow them to not only support these organizations, but to enable the arts and culture to more fully assist in America’s recovery. I would encourage you to check out our [ARP Arts Tracker](#) to see what other arts organizations have done to secure ARP funds. I also encourage you to add in your own information if appropriate.

Americans for the Arts continues to be the only nonprofit arts and cultural organization to partner with these groups of elected officials representing the interests of you, our members. These groups represent all levels of government and Americans for the Arts is pleased to be able to impact their decision-making processes around the arts and culture. Further, we stand out in comparison to the corporate and other major organizations that work with these organizations and even then, we have a larger, more public role than most of these other companies/organizations.

So, as our members, thank you for your support of these activities which not only brings greater visibility to the arts and culture, but more resources.

Western Governors Association

Our work with Western Governors Association (WGA) and the Western Governors Foundation (WGF) continues. As you will recall, in early 2020, we were approached by WGA staff to identify ways to partner around a project which would become WGF's signature project to establish their priorities and focus. This topic that the governors and AFTA agreed upon was "Arts and Healthy Living in the West." The project consists of two parts: the Indigenous Nutrition Education and Culinary Arts Series and Creative Aging. WGF and AFTA have identified all of our local partners and have been working with them to create the course structures, learning objectives and evaluation methods.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will continue to work with WGA and WGF staff on the Arts and Healthy Living Project to refine the program, complete funding and begin to engage families and seniors. We look forward to returning to WGA in person conferences once they restart which could be either at the end of this year or early in 2022.

National Lt. Governors Association

After over a year of virtual meetings, NLGA will resume its in person meetings at the end of August at their annual meeting in Point Clear, Alabama (near Mobile). At this meeting, with near pre-pandemic record attendance, about 20 percent of the attending Lt. Governors are new to their positions since NLGA last met in person. In addition to presenting our Public Leadership in the Arts Award, NLGA has allotted each partner time to address the conference. I will be focusing on how the arts are a central part of everyone's economy, how they continue to help people get through the pandemic and how they are part of the solution to re-opening.

NLGA continues to host virtual "coffee chats" and other informal opportunities to interact with the various Lt. Governors which we have been an active participant.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will attend and participate in the August NLGA events with the hope that we can resume in person meetings either this summer or next winter.

National Conference of State Legislatures



ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Fund Allocations

State Fiscal Recovery Fund Category

- Select all
- Access to Justice
- Arts, Culture and Tourism
- Broadband
- Economic Relief and Development
- Education
- General Infrastructure
- Housing
- Human Services
- Other
- Public Health Response
- Revenue Replacement
- State Operation and Administration
- Unemployment Trust Fund

States

- Select all
- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- ...

Authority

- Select all
- Legislative
- Executive



Description Search

Update	Category	State	Authority	Description	Source
7/7/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Alaska	Legislative	\$90 million for grants to tourism and other businesses to offset revenue loss or to respond to COVID-19.	Legislation
7/7/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	California	Legislative	\$95 million for the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) for Visit California to promote travel and tourism.	Legislation
7/8/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Connecticut	Legislative	\$100,000 to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the Norwalk Symphony.	Legislation
7/8/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Connecticut	Legislative	\$2 million to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the Working Cities Challenge	Legislation
7/8/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Connecticut	Legislative	\$200,000 to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the Downtown Storefront Business District.	Legislation
7/8/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Connecticut	Legislative	\$200,000 to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the Music Haven.	Legislation
7/8/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Connecticut	Legislative	\$30,000 to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the Playhouse Park.	Legislation
7/8/2021	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Connecticut	Legislative	\$30,000 to the Department of Economic and Community Development for the VFW Rocky Hill.	Legislation

While NCSL has not been having in person meetings, Americans for the Arts continues to work with NCSL in a variety of ways to make sure legislators understand how the arts and culture can assist states as they emerge from the pandemic. A few months ago, NCSL created their American Recovery Plan (ARP) [Tracker](#). When it first came out, there was no arts and culture category. We reached out to NCSL to offer our own research and request that they add an arts category. A week later, they let me know that it was added. Please check out their tracker and if you happened to see if we missed anything, let us know.

Nominations are currently open for the 2021 Public Leadership in the Arts state legislator awardee. If you have a legislator that is deserving, please nominate them by going [here](#).

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will participate at NCSL's Annual Conference in November in Tampa, FL and at their Jobs Summit in December in Las Vegas, NV.

National Association of Counties

The National Association of Counties' (NACo) was the last conference I attended in person before the pandemic. It was also the first in-person conference to re-start post pandemic with their Annual Conference happening July 9-12 at National Harbor in Prince George's County just outside of Washington, DC. Their average attendance is around 5,000 folks, but for this meeting they had around 3,000 (but they also planned and advertised it in just over three months). They did do a virtual component, but of the 3,000, only around 10% was virtual. In general, attendees just wanted to be in person and see their colleagues.

The arts played a nice role in the conference – with two dedicated sessions and two others where I spoke.



On the first full day, Saturday, NACo hosted their Arts and Culture Commission meeting (photo above). I am a member of this committee having been appointed by the NACo president. We are also a sponsor of this committee. There were around 70 attendees, which is down from the normal 175 to 200. I am already in conversation with the NACo arts staffer, who is new, to make some changes to revert to previous agendas. For example, this meeting was in the agenda as “NACo Arts and Culture Commission.” In the past, we have listed it this way: “Using the Arts to Create Jobs and Increase Tourism, brought to you by the NACo Arts and Culture Commission.” That is where we got the higher attendees, many of whom are not “arts folks” who just want to learn more.

At this meeting, I had the opportunity to show our ARP Arts Tracker and talk about a few examples of programs that others are already doing.



Sunday was the Arts's big day. AFTA presented the 2021 Public Leadership in the Arts Award to Mercer County, WV [Commissioner Greg Puckett](#) for his continued work in promoting the arts in his county and beyond. This photo is from the award presentation at a NACo general session in front of

their 3,000 attendees. This was done as part of the NACo Achievement awards where they give out certificates of accomplishment in 18 categories. We generally present the award halfway through the list and we are the only "outside" award and our awardee is the only recipient that is allowed to talk. The other just smile and take a photo with their certificate. Of note, one of the 18 award categories is for Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation. This year Leon County, FL was the recipient for their work in partnering with The Village Square, a non-profit public education organization dedicated to building civil discourse and where they developed a new series of events called "Created Equal."

With Commissioner Puckett and I is NACo President Gary Moore, who is from Boone County, Kentucky (which is just over the Kentucky/Ohio State line from Cincinnati.)



I was also pleased to see this sign outside of the awards general session highlighting our sponsorship.

That same day, I also spoke at the NACo Rural Action Caucus (RAC) to represent the award as Commissioner Puckett is the Chair of the RAC. At NACo, there is a fairly robust committee structure. The two dominate committees are the RAC and the Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC). I tailored my remarks to stress how smaller, rural counties can actually benefit more by embracing the arts then larger counties as a percentage of jobs or tax revenue.

At the same time as the RAC, the NACo Arts and Culture Commission hosted a Public Arts Walk in national harbor. Around 60 people attended learning about their robust public arts program. I was pleased to see that this event was highlighted by NACo in their Sunday morning email to all attendees.

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES **NACo**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES **NACo**

NACo CORPORATE PREMIER PARTNERS



Sponsorship Signage. I was pleased to see that AFTA's logo was listed on their main posters throughout the conference (photo) and in their conference guide. This is the most publicity we have ever received at NACo and we are in some good company.

Notice the other sponsors: Insurance companies, health care companies, IT/tech companies, Telecommunication companies, wealth management fund companies, etc.

Looking at this list, AFTA is certainly the only arts and cultural organization, but it is one of just a couple non-profit organizations. Those other non profits are:

- American Gas Association (with a \$56 million annual budget)

- American Association of American Railroads (\$53 million)

- National Association of Home Builders (\$74 million)

- Pew Charitable Trust (\$352 million)

- Western Governors University (\$794 million)

For comparison, AFTA's annual budget is around \$18 million dollars. AFTA continues to work above our size and staffing in arenas that our peers are not present. Because of this work, we are able to connect the dots with elected officials what they see nationally at NACo versus what they experience locally with their LAAs and other arts organizations.

Lastly, various NACo Policy committees approved four arts related resolutions.

- Proposed Resolution Encouraging Congress to Provide the Resources Necessary for Developing and Expanding Arts and Cultural Programming in Counties
- Proposed Resolution Encouraging Congress to Fund Creative Arts Therapies for Treating Veterans
- Proposed Resolution Encouraging Congress to Fund the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Incentive Grants at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Proposed Resolution Encouraging Congress to Enact the National Heritage Area Act to Establish Uniform Criteria, Oversight, Accountability, and Funding Stability for Congressionally-Designated National Heritage Areas

NACo uses these resolutions to authorize their government affairs department to advocate on these issues at the federal level.

Coming up: NACo will host its 2021 Legislative Conference in Washington, DC in February. We will continue to participate in the monthly Arts and Culture Committee meetings.

The United States Conference of Mayors

Nina Ozlu Tunceli, Americans for the Arts' Chief Counsel for Government and Public Affairs continues to work with USCM and the various mayors to keep the arts and culture top of mind.

In June, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley become president of The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) in the mist of Covid. Mayor Whaley outlined her top priorities as:

- Implementing/Protecting the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA),
- Passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework/American Jobs Plan,
- Passage of the American Families Plan,
- Reducing Gun Violence.

Americans for the Arts continues to work with USCM and mayors to implement these polices as it relates to the arts and in accordance with AFTA's [policy statements](#). Further, we specifically worked with our members to contact their mayors about how to use CARES and ARP funding to support the arts and culture.

Nina Ozlu Tunceli will also be representing AFTA at the Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports Committee meeting at USCM's Annual Conference, which will take place in Austin on August 31 – September 4, 2021. At this meeting, mayors will discuss and vote on several policy resolutions, including ones that Americans for the Arts put forward:

- Supporting Racial and Cultural Equity Resolution
- Creative Economy Revitalization Act (CERA) Resolution
- National Arts and Humanities Month Resolution - October 2021
- Arts And Culture Funding For FY 2022 Federal Appropriations Resolution

Stay tuned for our next update, which will include links to all the adopted policy resolutions. Once adopted, you can use these policy resolution to remind your local mayor about the value and importance of the arts and culture and to adopt similar resolutions at the local level.

Speaking of your mayors, nominations are currently open for the 2021 Public Leadership in the Arts for local arts leadership. If you have a mayor that is deserving, please nominate them by going [here](#).

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 Summer meeting in Austin, TX from August 31 to September 4th, 2021.

ICMA (City/County Managers Association)

ICMA recently asked AFTA if we would work with them to design a training module on creative placemaking. This module would be designed for ICMA members (city/county managers and their staff) to provide basic information about creative placemaking, examples of cities/counties who have been successful and tools to evaluate their city/counties cultural assets and finally to embrace creative placemaking as a program their city/county. AFTA and ICMA staff are in still in conversation but when we have more concrete details, we will share with you.

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

National League of Cities

I continue to try to identify substantial ways for Americans for the Arts and NLC to work more closely together around a specific topic such as how to use the arts for economic development or safety. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

Coming up: I continue to work with NCL leadership to establish an award honoring a city councilperson in 2021/2022.

I hope you found this report useful. Thanks for reading and never hesitate to reach out should you have any questions. -Jay