



To: County Arts Network Members

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

Re: Public Partnerships Spring Update

Date: June 15, 2022

Throughout the pandemic, Americans for the Arts has worked to not only maintain our public partnerships but strengthen them. This includes identifying new ways of engaging with elected officials directly and working with the various associations to find new ways to collaborate with them. In this report, you will notice an expansion of work with three of our partners, Western Governors, NACo and NLC.

In the state and local government affairs world, we talk about the [Big 7, those](#) organizations which represent the major groups of elected officials. They are:

[National Governors Association](#)

[National Conference of State Legislatures](#)

[National Association of Counties](#)

[National League of Cities](#)

[United States Conference of Mayors](#)

[Council of State Governments](#)

[ICMA, the city/ county managers association](#)

We also work with the [Western Governors Associations](#) and the [National Lt. Governors Association](#), both of which are not members of the Big 7.

I am very pleased that Americans for the Arts works with 6 of the 7 groups, (we don't work with Council of State Governments as they don't fit our sector's needs). Of these six, we still have room for growth with all of them, but especially with NGA and ICMA. We continue to be the only arts group, and one of the very few for profits companies or non-profits in general that work with all these organizations. This program can be a very valuable asset to you and your members, as it provides you with another way to convey your message to these key decision makers.

To give you an idea of some of the other groups that work with the Big 7 wholistically of which Americans for the Arts is part, please take a look at some of these logos.



Western Governors Association

Our work with the Western Governors Association (WGA) and the Western Governors Foundation (WGF) not only continues, but is expanding. For the past year, we have partnered to work on their “Arts and Healthy Living in the West” project. Over the course of that year, WGF and Americans for the Arts have worked with four local Indigenous partners to develop and create a nutritional/ cooking program for families that not only teaches basic cooking skills, food safety skills and nutritional learning, but also embeds a cultural lens in the learning process to demonstrate historical and traditional cooking methods, ingredients, and techniques. We are in the final process of issuing the project’s final report, which we will share widely.



At the same time, Americans for the Arts has agreed to partner with [Western Governors](#) to sponsor their [Celebrate the West](#) Arts Competition, which recognizes high school students’ artistic skills, offers cash prizes, and displays the winning art work in Governor’s Offices. You can check out the 2022 winners [here](#).

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will be attending the WGA Annual Conference in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho from July 26-28, 2022.

National Lt. Governors Association



The National Lt. Governors Association's held its 2022 Federal-State Relations meeting in Washington DC March 30-April 1st. Twenty-two Lt. Governors attended, including four that are either new or this is their first NLGA meeting.

The four new Lt. Governors are:

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, Minnesota

Lt. Gov. Lisa Cano-Burkhead, Nevada

Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell, Oklahoma

Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears, Virginia

As is standard, I reach out to the state arts agency, and the state arts advocacy organization in each of the states whose Lt. Governor is attending asking for any talking points they might have. Furthermore, for any new Lt. Governors, I put together a welcome packet and include any materials the state arts groups want to include and place it at their seats on the first day of the conference.



See this "candid photo" which was taken at the very end of the third and final day of the conference of the Nevada Lt. Governor with her Arts Packet on the top of her stack of papers from the meeting.

I always make a point of talking with each of the Lt. Governors who attend to check in and/or educate them about the creative economy.

Also of note at this meeting, the NLGA policy resolution, titled “Resolution in Support of the Creative Economy and in Continuing the NLGA Public Leadership in the Arts Award” was approved. You can find a copy of this resolution [here](#). The two action clauses authorize both the continuation of our award and the NLGA Executive Director to “continue to review and offer partnering opportunities with Americans for the Arts to pursue research and other potential joint projects.” Lt. Governors Hall-Long of Delaware and Billy Nungesser of Louisiana were our co-sponsors. I prepared comments for Lt. Gov. Hall Long to deliver in support of the resolution when it was debated. She did a great job of talking about the creative economy and Americans for the Arts.

Some of the topics of the meeting were: Opioid and other drug additions/deaths, homelessness, infrastructure, election security, small business, retirement quality of life, a national recycling strategy, water resources, STEM and human trafficking.



NLGA also hosted four ambassadors over two nights. We heard remarks from the European Union Ambassador and the Ambassadors from Ireland, Slovakia and Poland. Of course, Ukraine was their top policy issue.

Of interest though, the EU Ambassador stated in his remarks that his embassy does not highlight European Art in the ambassador’s residence, but works with US museums to provide artwork. They are currently working with a Baltimore and a Houston museum. I talked with the ambassador’s staff about this, and

consequently have met with the European Union’s Cultural Attaché to the United States. We are working to identify projects that we might be able to work together on and the Attaché even attended Americans for the Arts’ Annual Conference to learn more about the work our members do across the country.

In this photo, Nebraska Lt. Gov Mike Foley, chair of NLGA, poses with the Polish Ambassador on the left and the Slovakia Ambassador on the right.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will attend and participate at NLGA’s Annual Meeting in Chicago July 20-22, 2022 where we will present the Public Leadership in the Arts Award to a Lt. Governor.

National Conference of State Legislatures

Our work with NCSL remains strong. While NCSL's major meetings are in August and December, Americans for the Arts continues to serve as a resource to NCSL and their members.

For example, NCSL staff spontaneously reached out to Americans for the Arts to ask for assistance in helping with finding a cultural outing for a DC based gathering of State Legislators who chair or are members of their state's budget/fiscal committees. Americans for the Arts was able to work with our friends at the Kennedy Center to arrange for a VIP tour for the group along with being able to chat with these legislators about the value of the creative economy in their states. As this subgroup of legislators, a group that Americans for the Arts has not addressed in the past, helps write their state's budgets, this was a great group to chat with given their importance in creating state budgets.

In my last report, I noted that Americans for the Arts honored Colorado Representative Leslie Herod with our Public Leadership in the Arts Award at NCSL's winter gathering December. I wanted to give you an update. In March, I traveled to Denver to re-present the award to Rep. Herod at Colorado Business Committee for the Arts' Annual Awards Luncheon. This was a great event with over 600 people from across the state, from artists to leaders of major businesses located (or operating) in Colorado. Americans for the Arts is grateful to our member, the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, for thinking about Rep. Herod and including her award in their program.



In this photo, Rep. Herod accepts the award from Colorado Business Committee for the Arts Executive Director Cristin Crampton Day (on left) NCSL's Director, Center for Legislative Strengthening Natalie Wood and myself on stage after the award presentation.

Rep Herod, in addition to being chair of Appropriations, is also the chair of the arts caucus. She has a great talking point of comparing the creative economy in Colorado (\$14 billion) to the ski industry (\$5 billion). Everyone thinks the ski industry is the largest but is mistaken and always surprised when she gives the numbers.

Additionally, while in Denver, I met with other staff at NCSL (military and veterans) and they are interested in having Americans for the Arts President and CEO Nolen Bivens speak at their December conference in San Diego.

Lastly, I was able to stop by the Western Governors Association offices for a couple hours to work with them on wrapping up our nutritional program.

As a reminder, nominations are currently open for the 2023 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 Legislative Summit (annual conference) in Denver from August 1-3, 2022 and their Fall Forum in San Diego in December 5-7, 2022.

National Association of Counties

Our work with the National Association of Counties (NACo) continues to expand and deepen.

We continue to be active in NACo's Arts and Culture Commission providing updates at their monthly meetings. Furthermore, we work with NACo Staff to identify topics and speakers for the group.

In February, NACo held its Legislative Conference in Washington, DC with around 3,000 attendees. Americans for the Arts was pleased to participate in several ways. For one, we worked with the Arts and Cultural Commission to put together a panel discussion on how the arts lead to economic development. The panel again presented to a packed room of attendees.



Americans for the Arts' President and CEO Nolen Bivens spoke to two other groups. Firstly, he was a keynote speaker at the joint Healthy Counties and Arts and Culture Commission Luncheon on how the arts can contribute to healthy lives.

Secondly, he spoke to the NACo Military and Veterans Committee on how the arts work with members of the military continuum to assist with PTSD, TBI and other similar injuries.

At both meetings, his remarks were met with positive reviews.

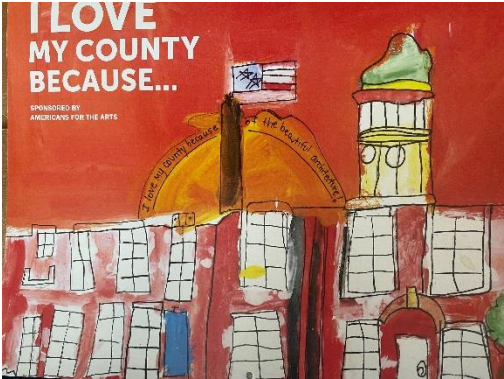
In addition to our "normal work," over the past year, we have expanded our work in two substantive areas.

Earlier this year, NACo launched its' [Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge](#), which will work with six rural counties across the country to use the creative economy to help solve an existing problem in that county. Americans for the Arts serves as their national policy expert for the Challenge with funding being provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Other national experts will be brought in periodically throughout the one-year project.

In their application, each county was asked to describe the issue that they are working to solve and then put together a team to work on this project over the next year. Those teams must include at least one: county elected official, an artist or arts administrator, and a representative from the county whose field is aligned with the topic of the proposal. Other team members are welcomed, provided they bring a needed voice or skill to the team.

The [six counties](#) and their program focus areas are:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Hawai'i County, HI | Trauma and natural disaster recovery |
| Van Buren County, MI | Creative placemaking and mental health |
| Perry County, OH | Attracting new residents and community development |
| Potter County, PA | Population loss, especially younger families |
| La Crosse County, WI | Climate Change |
| Greenbrier County, WV | Opioid/drug additions |



Lastly, Americans for the Arts was pleased to sponsor NACo's ["I Love My County" Arts Competition](#). The competition works with schools and students to submit drawings or other artwork that demonstrates how counties make a difference in people's lives.

The winning artwork is compiled into a wall calendar that is sent to each of the over 15,000 county elected officials in the United States. This is a great way (excuse) for arts leaders to go visit their county elected officials to talk about the arts and culture's effects on local economies.

Coming up: NACo will host its 2022 Annual Conference in Denver, CO on July 21-24 where Americans for the Arts will speak and present our Public Leadership in the Arts Award. Furthermore, 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 The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the various mayors to keep the arts and culture top of mind.

Americans for the Arts was pleased to participate in USCM's Annual Meeting, which took place in Reno, Nevada June 3-6, 2022. As always, USCM always includes the arts and culture in their meeting agendas.



This year, USCM welcomed Maria Rosario Jackson, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts. Chair Jackson spoke to the Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports (TAPES) committee and at a plenary session of the Conference. She talked about the NEA's DEI work, and their desire to work with other agencies such as HHS, HUD, and Transportation. She also pledged continued support for the Mayors' Institute for City Design.

Pictured (L-R): Nevada Arts Council Executive Director Tony Manfredi, NEA Chair Jackson and Jay Dick.

Additionally, USCM hosted a public art walking tour for attendees along with arts being infused into the various evening's activities.

This year, Americans for the Arts submitted several policy resolutions for mayors to consider. We are pleased to note that the following resolutions were approved by not only the TAPES Committee, but also by the mayors as a whole during their business meeting.

Resolution Number 90: [Arts And Culture Funding for FY 2023 Federal Appropriations](#)

Resolution Number 92: [National Arts and Humanities Month - October 2022](#)

Resolution Number 74: [Support Congressional Creative Economy Legislation](#)

Resolution Number 93: [Supporting Relief for Arts and Cultural Institutions](#)



Americans for the Arts was also pleased to partner with USCM to present the 2022 Public Leadership in the Arts Award for Citizen Advocate to two-time Oscar nominee [Jeremy Renner](#).

Mr. Renner is best known for his role as Hawkeye from the Marvel Universe. He was honored for his work in promoting art and arts education not only locally in the Reno, Nevada area, but also nationally through his professional work.

In this photo, Jeremy Renner is presented with his award by (L-R) Reno, Nevada Mayor Hillary Schieve, Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of the United States Conference of Mayors and Jay Dick.

Lastly, longtime friends of the arts, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve was installed as the First Vice President of the United States Conference of Mayors. Mayor Schieve is also the chair of the TAPES committee and has used her position to actively promote the arts and culture to her fellow mayors. [Mayor Schieve](#) is the 2019 recipient of the Public Leadership in the Arts Award. She also announced a special task force focusing on mental health that she will be chairing. Americans for the Arts congratulates Mayor Schieve on her work and has pledged to work with her on her mental health initiative.

Joining Mayor Schieve are Miami Mayor Francis X. Suarez, who was formally installed as President of USCM and Columbus, OH Mayor Andrew Ginther as Second Vice President. We welcome both of these mayors and are excited to work with them.

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 Winter Meeting in Washington, DC January 18-20, 2023.

National League of Cities

We are pleased to announce that we have expanded our work with the National League of Cities (NLC) with the establishment of the [Public Leadership in the Arts Award](#) for a City Councilperson. This award expands our existing award program to recognize the valuable work that city council leaders do day in and day out to support the creative economy. The award will be presented at NLC's City Summit in November. To nominate your city councilperson for this award, go to our [nomination page](#).

Additionally, we are working with NLC staff to speak at the City Summit about the creative economy and what it means to their members who are often in smaller, more rural cities. This is a message that some of these city leaders might not have ever heard before.



NLC has approximately 3,000 members which includes cities with populations as little as 10,000.

With our expanded relationship with the NLC, Americans for the Arts' messages will be conveyed to a wider group of local (and more rural) decision makers, especially given that NLC's focus is on medium to smaller cities.

Given that the vast majority of cities in the United States are under 25,000, and it is these cities who are more likely to not recognize the value and importance of the creative industries, this partnership affords us the opportunity to engage new segments of local governments.

Coming up: Americans for the Arts will be presenting our inaugural Public Leadership in the Arts Award to a City Councilperson and speaking at NLC's Cities Summit (annual conference) in Kansas City, MO from November 15-19, 2022.

ICMA (City/County Managers Association)

ICMA and Americans for the Arts are still in discussions about designing 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 embrace creative placemaking as a program in their city/county. While we are still in conversation, when we have more concrete details, we will share those with you.

Coming up: We will continue to work with ICMA to establish an award for a city/county manager and speak at their September 17-21 Annual Conference in Columbus Ohio.

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