

# STATE POLICY BRIEFS

## Tools for Arts Decision Making

### WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENT SUPPORT THE ARTS?

State governments today face monumental challenges: record-breaking budget shortfalls, rising unemployment, widespread home foreclosures and escalating needs for public assistance. States are wrestling with these immediate pressures while also trying to address long-term concerns about education, economic competitiveness and health care. All the while, public managers and elected officials must uphold the principles that taxpayers expect: thrift, accountability, equity and transparency.

In this environment, all areas of spending—including the arts—are under increased scrutiny. Lawmakers may question whether government has a legitimate role to play in the arts or may ask why the arts should receive funds when so many other needs are pressing.

We encourage you to welcome dialogue about these issues. The 40-year history of state arts agencies proves that when policymakers understand how the arts benefit government and citizens, they find a way to continue support, even during hard financial times. We hope that this document will help bring those benefits to the foreground and help your state answer common questions about government's role in arts support.

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Designed for public arts leaders and advocates to excerpt and adapt, this material can be used to support your state's case for the arts. Select the points that are most relevant in your situation. Quote the research. Add your own examples, and consider the tips and ideas included at the end of the document.

For more information on promoting the arts in state policy, explore the [Research](#) and [Advocacy](#) sections of the [NASAA Web site](#) or contact the NASAA office at 202-347-6352.

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## WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENT SUPPORT THE ARTS?

### 1. Does every state fund the arts?

Yes. Like most areas of state spending, public appropriations to the arts have seen periods of growth and decline tied to state budget conditions. During the past 40 years, state governments have maintained a commitment to the arts, establishing arts agencies in all 56 states and jurisdictions and allocating funding—even during recessions—to state arts agencies and their programs.

### 2. Why are the arts a good public sector investment?

The arts are an important policy asset and prosperity generator for states. In addition to their inherent value to society, the arts offer a distinctive blend of benefits, including:

- **ECONOMIC DRIVERS:** The arts create jobs and produce tax revenue. A strong arts sector is an economic asset that stimulates business activity, attracts tourism revenue, retains a high quality work force and stabilizes property values. The arts have been shown to be a successful and sustainable strategy for revitalizing rural areas, inner cities and populations struggling with poverty.
- **EDUCATIONAL ASSETS:** The arts foster young imaginations and facilitate children's success in school. They provide the critical thinking, communications and innovation skills essential to a productive 21st-century work force.
- **CIVIC CATALYSTS:** The arts create a welcoming sense of place and a desirable quality of life. The arts also support a strong democracy, engaging citizens in civic discourse, dramatizing important issues and encouraging collective problem solving.
- **CULTURAL LEGACIES:** The arts preserve unique culture and heritage, passing a state's precious cultural character and traditions along to future generations.
- See [What the Research Says](#) for a detailed list of public benefits of the arts, including links to related research.

State lawmakers recognize other value-added advantages to making the arts a part of public policy:

- **Incorporating the arts improves the impact of other state policies and services.** Numerous states have recognized this and incorporated the arts into economic revitalization, education, literacy, work-force development, tourism, community sustainability and social service plans.
- **Small businesses and individual entrepreneurs are critical to every state's economy.** The arts are a dynamic contributor to the small business sector. The creative industries are comprised of many talented workers who are self-employed,

“States have an opportunity to both improve livability and boost state and local economies by investing in the arts and culture.”

National Governors  
Association

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freelancers or employed by micro-enterprises. According to National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) analysis of U.S. Census occupational data, artists are 3.5 times more likely than other workers to be self-employed. Nonprofit organizations, too, are small businesses and play an important role in training creative workers and incubating artistic enterprises.

- **The arts are a hallmark of state innovation.** The arts are part of a state's creative capacity, spurring innovation and creating distinctive products and locales that attract tourists, businesses and residents alike. Creativity is part of any state's competitive edge in a modern marketplace where distinctive design and effective communications can spell the success or failure of a business or policy venture.

Leading public sector organizations—including the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Education Commission of the States—recognize the arts as part of a strong state policy portfolio. Business leaders, economists, property developers, tourism officials and community planners have joined with parents, educators and civic leaders to promote public policies that strengthen the arts. They do so because they recognize the benefits that accrue to communities when government helps to foster a robust arts sector.

“Having an abundance of unique arts and events means more revenue for local businesses and makes our communities more attractive to young, talented professionals—whose decisions on where to start a career or business are increasingly driven by quality of life and the availability of cultural amenities.”

Bart Peterson  
Former President  
National League of Cities

### 3. How can we afford to support the arts in hard times?

Hard times require public officials to make the most of every asset and to adopt policies that maximize a state's recovery potential. The arts are a proven part of that mix. The arts are a recovery asset that supports jobs, stimulates commerce, stabilizes property values and provides many other economic benefits. In the words of the Southern Legislative Conference, “. . .the growing strength of the arts—as proven admirably during the last downturn, when they continued to create positive economic flows despite depleted budgets—may bring a time when policymakers think twice about substantially cutting funding during the next economic crunch.”

In addition to their many economic advantages, the arts offer timely assistance with educational and civic challenges that tend to escalate during tough times. The arts are also central to community resiliency. Whether states are facing economic distress, natural disasters or other adversity, the arts are a powerful force for recovery and healing, a benefit that few other industries offer.

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Given current arts funding levels, cutting the arts will not eliminate any state's budget gap. The arts comprise a very small portion of state spending, less than one tenth of one percent. Reducing expenditures that modest won't appreciably affect state budgets, but will damage the cultural sector's ability to provide jobs, goods and services to communities. Furthermore, arts cutbacks can lead to much larger losses, since arts grantees use the "seal of approval" of state funding to attract dollars from other sources.

[Review the research](#) about the economic benefits of the arts.

### 4. What do states currently invest in the arts?

Legislative appropriations to all state arts agencies currently total \$297 million, or \$0.96 per capita. This represents only 0.042%—less than one tenth of one percent—of state general fund expenditures. Yet the return on this investment is tremendous. State arts agencies support about 18,000 organizations, schools and artists, making the economic, educational, civic and cultural [benefits](#) of the arts available to 5,100 communities across the United States.

Over time, changes to legislative appropriations to the arts mirror the health of overall state budgets. Data from the last 40 years shows that governors and legislatures invest more in the arts in times of state budget stability. During recessions, arts funding contracts. These reductions are typically similar in size to cuts made to other state expenditures. Compared to other branches of state government, however, state arts agencies are small, with limited human resources and funds that get spread very thin in order to reach the entire population of a state. State arts agencies operate with no reserves, dedicating all available resources to current constituent services. This means that even small-magnitude cuts to state arts funding tend to have a high-magnitude impact, resulting in fewer communities reached, numerous canceled projects, gaps in services to the public and loss of leveraged funds.

“State arts agencies receive 0.042%—less than one tenth of one percent—of state general fund expenditures.”

National Assembly of  
State Arts Agencies

[Review the research](#) about state funding for the arts.

### 5. Can't we just use federal funds?

No. According to federal statute, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funding for state arts agencies must not be used to supplant nonfederal funding. This means that states may not use federal dollars to replace state dollars with the intention or effect of reducing state funding for a state arts agency.

Furthermore, a viable and effective arts agency supported by the state is a prerequisite for receiving federal funds. States get federal funds in the form of Partnership Agreements, which are flexible block

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grants from the NEA. Although state arts agencies may allocate these funds according to their own states' needs, the following criteria must be met:

- The state must have a state arts agency that is officially designated and financially supported by the state.
- The state arts agency must have its own board, council or commission.
- The agency must have a comprehensive statewide plan for the arts that includes input from the public and is responsive to the needs of the state.
- Funding and programming decisions must be made on criteria that take fairness and excellence into account.
- The agency must demonstrate leadership in providing public access to the arts and arts education as well as addressing the needs of underserved communities.
- The agency must maintain sound fiscal management, administrative procedures and accountability reporting.
- Federal funds must be matched on at least a 1-to-1 basis.

In the 1960s, the federal government provided incentive grants designed to assist states in the creation of arts agencies. Since that time, however, state appropriations for the arts have far surpassed the initial federal investment, because states recognized the many benefits of investing in the arts and sought to maximize those returns. Today, legislative appropriations for the arts comprise 83% of total state arts agency revenue; NEA dollars comprise 12%.

### 6. Why can't the private sector do this job?

It takes a mixture of both public and private funds to support the arts. Although many citizens and companies contribute to cultural activities, the benefits of the arts cannot be fully realized without the unique contributions of government. In the marketplace or among individual philanthropists, many motivations (including personal goals and advertising exposure) drive funding decisions. In contrast, **government investment serves the *public interest*** and ensures that all areas of a state receive the benefits of the arts.

Government support also:

- **provides fair access to arts resources**, especially among underserved populations;
- **accurately assesses the state's cultural needs and assets**, then organizes efforts to help the state achieve goals that are relevant to its policy priorities;

“A society that supports the arts and the humanities is not engaging in philanthropic activity so much as it is assuring the conditions of its own flourishing.”

President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities

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- **provides accountability**, ensuring that funds are distributed according to the public interest;
- **reduces barriers to public participation in the arts**, such as those linked to poverty, geographic isolation, limited education, lack of information, disability, age or ethnicity;
- **secures federal Partnership Agreement dollars**, which only state arts agencies are eligible to receive on behalf of a state.

### 7. Why are state arts agencies essential?

The presence of a strong state arts agency ensures that all communities—regardless of their geographic location, political affiliation or economic status—are systematically and equitably served. Other public funding mechanisms do not attain these same goals.

For instance, legislative earmarks are used in some states to supplement arts appropriations. While these line items can be a valuable source of funding, they inevitably exclude some communities. Local government funding is another key source of arts support, but it remains uneven, tending to concentrate in areas with the highest populations or the greatest wealth. Only state arts agencies are positioned to provide strategic and equitable leadership and support to all areas of the state.

- **State arts agencies possess specialized expertise related to creative business development and cultural planning.**

These skills provide sound stewardship of resources and position state arts agencies to act as a locus of expertise and learning that benefits the arts community, other branches of government and the private sector, too.

- **State arts agencies support functions that usually are not addressed through other funding mechanisms.** The NEA primarily funds well-established arts organizations, whereas state arts agencies devote much of their funding to smaller organizations, community groups and schools.

Corporations, in order to secure maximum marketing exposure, are most likely to sponsor blockbuster arts events or other highly commercialized activities. In contrast, state arts agency grant making emphasizes grass-roots arts development. State arts agency grants place priority on educational programming, community outreach, long-term planning and other activities consistent with the public interest. In addition, state arts agencies often provide operating grants and funding for individual artists—two important areas that few foundations or corporations routinely support and that the federal government does not.

- **State arts agencies are the designated vehicle** for receiving Partnership Agreement funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

“The most fundamental unique asset of [a state arts agency] is its authorization to represent the interests of the state in developing the arts as an important human activity and industry.”

Mark H. Moore  
John F. Kennedy School of  
Government  
Harvard University

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### WHAT DO STATE ARTS AGENCIES ACHIEVE?

State arts agencies offer a variety of services, including grants, marketing assistance, public information, technical assistance, training and research. Combined, these services:

- **make the economic, educational and civic benefits of the arts available to all communities** by broadening public access to the arts and reducing barriers to cultural participation;
- **support academic success** by helping schools to tap the arts as a teaching and learning asset;
- **promote the attainment of state education standards** for learning in core subjects;
- **foster sound management practices** by requiring grantees to adopt rigorous planning, evaluation and financial management systems;
- **contribute to a distinctive state identity** through activities that celebrate and promote its artistic assets as export goods and magnets for travelers and investors;
- **hone a state's competitive edge** by fostering a creative work force, shaping an attractive quality of life, and developing the networks of creative products and professionals a state needs to succeed in today's marketplace;
- **support small business development** by providing catalytic funding and essential skills to creative entrepreneurs;
- **preserve cultural heritage** as a legacy for future generations;
- **build bridges across cultures, generations and geographies**, supporting civic engagement and involving citizens in community and civic life;
- **leverage federal dollars** that can be used to address each state's individual goals and support arts activities in many communities;
- **encourage other investments in the arts**, catalyzing tax revenues, public and private investment, and entrepreneurial business practices;
- **demonstrate accountability and good government** by pioneering innovative programs and adhering to the highest management and accountability standards that both states and the federal government require.

State arts agencies have demonstrated their ability to deliver value to the public over time. About half of the states established state arts agencies prior to the creation of the NEA in 1965. Its creation then stimulated the rest of the states to create state arts agencies shortly thereafter. Since that time, state arts agencies have achieved periods of strong growth and shared, along with the rest of state government, the pain of funding cuts during recessions.

In good times and bad, however, state legislatures have continued a commitment to state arts agencies because of the singular benefits that they provide to citizens and communities.

## 8. Why fund artists and arts organizations?

Artists form the foundation of a state's creative environment. Artists act as creators and individual entrepreneurs who provide many of the products and designs that drive innovation and shape a state's

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cultural character. Many artists also work as educators, providing training in creative skills and passing on cultural traditions from one generation to the next. However, few programs in either the private or public sector assist artists. State arts agencies play an important role in offering resources, information and training programs that help artists develop their careers, market their products and share their ideas with others.

State arts agencies also provide extensive grants and services to nonprofit arts organizations. The effects of these grants accrue far beyond the recipient groups to benefit the community as a whole. Arts organizations create many opportunities for citizens to experience and learn about the arts. They form an essential bridge between artists and communities, facilitating public access to artists and to artworks. Cultural organizations small and large also act as community hubs and catalysts for social cohesion and neighborhood revitalization. Like other enterprises, they employ workers, purchase goods and services, and contribute to a state's economic bottom line.

As the National Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 states, "While no government can call a great artist or scholar into existence, it is necessary and appropriate for government to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent."

### 9. Does state funding for the arts cause dependence on public dollars?

No. Arts organizations rely on a blend of funds, predominantly earned income and private contributions. Although the mix of funds varies among different kinds and sizes of arts organizations, government funding is typically a very modest slice of the pie. State arts funding comprises a small percentage—approximately 2.3%—of total grantee revenue.

Despite its small size, that percentage plays a large role in providing benefits to citizens. State government support ensures the accessibility of the arts and strengthens education programs and the public outreach that aligns arts services with the needs of each community. State arts agencies require management and planning practices that contribute to long-term financial stability for grantees. Like other forms of government assistance to small businesses, state investments in the arts also support creative entrepreneurship, catalyze new ventures and create a vibrant market for the import and export of a state's cultural goods.

"Direct grants never finance the bulk of artistic activity in the U.S.; they fill gaps, enhance arts education, spread new creations, and enable preservation. Direct grants thus complement, and do not replace, other means of arts funding."

National Endowment for the Arts

Furthermore, government funding helps to attract other investments. State arts agency grants typically come with a minimum 1-to-1 matching requirement, but matches often exceed that minimum. Dollars

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from a state arts agency provide a widely recognized “seal of approval” that helps grantees to raise additional funds from individuals, corporations and foundations and to attract partners in entrepreneurial and earned income ventures. For every \$1 of total grant funds awarded by state arts agencies nationwide, about \$40 in matching funds is secured from earned or contributed funds.

### 10. What do voters think?

Citizens value abundant cultural opportunities for themselves and their families. They expect government to play a role in making the arts widely available in schools and communities:

- Both state and national public opinion polls have found that a strong majority of Americans favors a governmental role in funding the arts.
- Research has shown consistently that voters feel especially favorably toward arts education. Regardless of party affiliation, voters in a recent national study were willing to cast their ballots against elected officials who do not support programs and policies that foster imagination and creativity in public schools.
- According to a National Endowment for the Arts Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, the public would like to increase its arts attendance: 67% would like to visit more museums, 54% want to see more stage productions and 50% would like to attend more dance performances.
- Polls of the business community reveal that a vibrant arts sector is important to that constituency, as well.

“91% of voters indicate that the arts are essential to building capacities of the imagination. 57% of voters say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who votes to cut funding for building capacities of the imagination in public education.”

Lake Research Partners

[Review the research](#) about public opinion.

### 11. What the Research Says

Research has documented numerous economic, educational and civic benefits of investing in the arts. This catalog offers a succinct summary of those research findings. For more details and links to the source material, follow the “Review the research” links at the end of each section.

#### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

**The arts help communities to prosper.** The arts are part of a well-diversified 21st-century economy. Along with nonprofit arts organizations, creative enterprises make significant contributions to state and

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local economies, generating employment and tax revenues and providing goods and services in high demand by the public. (Sources: [National Governors Association](#); [Americans for the Arts](#))

**The arts put people to work.** By investing in the arts, the public sector is fostering a skilled work force of creative occupations that contribute to economic productivity. The arts employ artists, managers, marketers, technicians, teachers, designers, carpenters and workers in a wide variety of other trades and professions. Like other jobs, arts jobs help to pay mortgages and send children to college. There are [686,000 creative businesses](#) in the United States that employing 2.8 million workers, and jobs in nonprofit arts organizations add up to more than [5.7 million](#) nationwide. (Sources: [National Governors Association](#); [Americans for the Arts](#).)

“People don't come to America for our airports, people don't come to America for our hotels... they come for our culture, real and imagined.”

Garrison Keillor

**The arts attract tourism revenue.** Cultural tourism is a huge market, comprised of some 118 million cultural travelers—people who include arts and heritage in their trips each year. Furthermore, cultural tourists stay longer and spend 36% more at their destinations than other kinds of travelers. (Sources: [Mandala Research](#), [Travel Industry Association of America](#))

**The arts are a sound rural development strategy.** The arts help to address some of the unique challenges faced by rural communities, including geographic isolation, infrastructure limitations and population flight. The arts can help to diversify rural economies by creating sustainable small businesses, improving quality of life for residents, and attracting visitors and investment. (Source: [National Governors Association](#))

**The arts are a business magnet.** Arts organizations purchase goods and services that help local merchants thrive. Arts audiences also spend money—more than \$100 billion—on admissions, transportation, food, lodging and souvenirs that boost local economies. The arts act as a magnet for businesses, attracting companies that want to offer their employees and clients a creative climate and an attractive community with high amenity value. (Sources: [State Arts Agency Economic Impact Studies](#); [Americans for the Arts](#))

**The arts give industries a competitive edge.** American companies face an international marketplace where value is increasingly determined by a product's artistic qualities, uniqueness, performance and design. Creative workers help businesses to innovate new product lines and effectively market their services. (Source: [National Governors Association](#))

**The arts create a distinctive state brand identity.** Along with a community's physical landmarks, its cultural landmarks, traditions and character are part of its magnetism. A cohesive brand identity is an economic asset that can help both places and products to prosper. (Source: [National Governors Association](#))

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**The arts enhance property values.** The arts make neighborhoods attractive places to live, work and play. The arts help to revitalize blighted areas and strengthen both commercial and residential housing markets. (Source: [Social Impact of the Arts Project / The Reinvestment Fund](#))

[Review more research](#) about the economic benefits of the arts.

### EDUCATIONAL AND WORK-FORCE BENEFITS

#### Students engaged in the arts perform better academically.

Numerous longitudinal research studies have documented that students who receive arts education exhibit improvements in their performance in other subjects, including reading and math achievement, and on standardized test scores. (Sources: [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies / Arts Education Partnership](#); [The College Board](#); [University of California at Los Angeles](#))

“If we are going to be on the cutting edge of a global economy, we need well rounded citizens who use their imagination to solve our world’s problems. Arts are one way to insure that America remains an Imagine Nation.”

National Association of Secondary  
School Principals

**The arts help kids to succeed in school and life.** Students who receive arts education have stronger social skills, improved motivation to learn and more esteem for themselves and their peers. Arts education helps to create a positive school environment in which learning and human development can occur. (Sources: [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies](#); [University of California at Los Angeles](#); [Arts Education Partnership](#); [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies / Arts Education Partnership](#))

**Arts education provides skills critical to 21st-century success.** In a global economy that is driven by knowledge and ideas, arts education is a necessity. The best paying jobs require workers with creativity and higher order thinking and communication skills, and companies are increasingly looking for these qualities in the workers they recruit. While studying the arts, students hone their perceptual, analytic and interpretive skills while developing creative thinking, communications and problem-solving abilities. (Sources: [Education Commission of the States](#); [National Governors Association](#); [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies](#))

**The arts address a shortage of creative workers.** Eighty-five percent of business leaders say they can’t find enough job applicants with creativity and innovation skills. Arts education, K-12 and beyond, is part of the solution to this challenge. (Source: [The Conference Board](#))

**The arts keep kids in school.** Dropout rates are causing serious academic and economic concerns for many communities. Numerous studies have found that arts education programs can help to reduce dropout rates, increasing the retention and engagement rates of students and raising educational attainment levels. (Sources: [Center for Arts Education](#); [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies / Arts Education Partnership](#); [Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education](#))

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**The arts help at-risk youth.** Participation in arts programs decreases young people's involvement in delinquent behavior, increases academic outcomes for disadvantaged children, and improves students' attitudes about themselves and their future. (Sources: [U.S. Department of Justice](#); [University of California at Los Angeles](#); [Arts Education Partnership](#))

**Voters are committed to arts education.** The American public, by an overwhelming margin, believes the arts are vital to a well-rounded education. Studies also indicate that a majority of voters, regardless of political affiliation, are willing to cast their ballots against elected officials who oppose education programs that are designed to foster student imaginations. (Sources: [Lake Research Partners](#); [Harris Polling](#); [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies/Arts Education Partnership](#))

[Review more research](#) about the educational and work-force benefits of the arts.

### CIVIC BENEFITS

**The arts contribute to community vitality.** A growing body of research points to the arts as an engine for civic renewal. Citizen engagement in the arts creates a strong shared identity and instills pride in a state's cultural heritage. (Sources: [The Community Arts Network](#); [Social Impact of the Arts Project / The Reinvestment Fund](#); [The Urban Institute](#))

**The arts bring public spaces to life.** Artworks and arts activities make public spaces livable, attractive and distinctive, engaging residents in the creation of welcoming and sustainable places to live, work, play and raise families. (Sources: [The Community Arts Network](#); [Social Impact of the Arts Project / The Reinvestment Fund](#))

**The arts foster civic participation and a strong democracy.** The arts enhance our ability to illustrate viewpoints, to dramatize issues, to inspire action and to see things through the eyes of others—all necessary components of a thriving democracy. Americans who engage in the arts are more likely to engage in other aspects of community life, such as voting and volunteering. The arts also enhance civic dialogue, capturing the American experience and giving voice to our joys and aspirations and the conscience of our communities. (Sources: [National Endowment for the Arts](#); [Americans for the Arts](#))

“Cultural agencies serve both cities and rural areas. These agencies help make culture accessible and enhance the lives of those who otherwise would not have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities. In addition, culture offers intangible benefits. It helps create a community soul and develop a real ‘sense of place.’ All these things combine to result in better, more livable communities.”

National Conference of  
State Legislatures

**The arts contribute to wellness and healthy aging.** According to a national medical study, seniors who participate regularly in the arts report better health, fewer doctor's visits, less medication usage, less

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dementia, better mental health and higher rates of social engagement. (Sources: [George Washington University Center on Aging](#); [National Endowment for the Arts](#))

**The arts are a communications asset in a global society.** The arts build bridges among people. They facilitate intercultural understanding and provide a common lexicon for building relationships in an increasingly diverse and global society. (Sources: [Social Impact of the Arts Project / The Reinvestment Fund](#); [National Governors Association](#))

**The arts contribute to collective efficacy.** Research has shown that the arts build resiliency, foster social capital, strengthen interpersonal ties and empower residents, all of which nurture the collective efficacy of a community to address major problems, including poverty.

(Sources: [Social Impact of the Arts Project / The Reinvestment Fund](#); [John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University](#); [Americans for the Arts](#))

[Review more research](#) about the civic benefits of the arts.

## 12. Make the Most of These Ideas

The most effective case for the arts is built around a careful selection of arguments and evidence. Here are some suggestions for fine-tuning and adapting this document for use in your own state:

- **Excerpt at will.** This document is designed to be a menu of material that you can excerpt, mix and match as needed. Keep it close at hand when you are preparing testimony, crafting presentations, developing advocacy talking points or working with the media. A low-format Microsoft Word version is available to make it easy to borrow from the text.
- **Integrate this information into your communications.** Publish short excerpts in your newsletter or include links on your Web site.
- **Adapt these arguments to your target audience.** Tailor your case to the interests and motivations of individual policymakers. Some will respond best to economic arguments, others will be more alive to educational or civic themes. Adapt the messages as needed to match the political values and policy priorities in your state.
- **Augment these arguments with local data and stories.** Although national information can be a useful point of departure, policymakers will need local examples and data to understand the relevance of your case to themselves and to voters. Be sure to highlight examples from your own state that showcase the power of the arts and that demonstrate how communities benefit from the work of your state arts agency.
- **Incorporate this information into orientation materials and training events.** This document can help new council members, new agency staff members or beginning advocates to answer questions about the value of government funding.

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- **Familiarize your key spokespeople with these concepts.** Your leadership, staff, constituents and advocates all should be able to speak in harmony about the value of the arts and why support for the state arts agency is essential.
- **Add your own "elevator speeches."** Pick one or two themes from this document that resonate in your state, then distill that argument into a short statement that can be used as a conversation starter with potential supporters.
- **Review these materials as a team.** This document can serve as an occasion to gather your agency staff, council and members of your advocacy community to discuss what messaging strategies will be most effective in your state.

For additional case-making tips and tools, explore the [Research](#) and [Advocacy](#) sections of the [NASAA Web site](#).

### About the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the membership organization that unites, represents and serves the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. Its mission is to strengthen state arts agencies by representing their individual and collective interests, empowering their work through knowledge and advancing the arts as an essential public benefit. NASAA serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding and the arts. Together, NASAA and the state arts agencies work to broaden access to the arts in every corner of America and to serve the public good by making the arts an essential ingredient of state policy.

### State Policy Briefs

*State Policy Briefs* is a series that synthesizes research on key policy issues affecting the arts and state arts agencies. Designed to inform cultural policy decision making at the state level, this series provides information on state arts agency policy alternatives and innovative strategies for serving the public. For information on ways to build political and constituent support for the arts, consult *The NASAA Advocate: Strategies for Building Arts Support*.