



NCAPER Steering Committee Minutes
May 15, 2020 3:00 PM via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

Barbara Davis, Michael Royce, Ted S. Berger, Kay Takeda, Amy Schwartzman, Andi Mathis, Tom Clareson, James Hafferman, Mollie Quinlan-Hayes, Lilia Sterling, Susie Surkamer, Ruby Lopez Harper, Stephanie Atkins, Jan Newcomb, Barbara Schaffer Bacon. and Guest: Jerelle Jenkins, AFTA. **Absent or excused:** Cornelia Carey, Tom Simplot, Eddie Torres

CALL TO ORDER: 3:05

Minutes moved and passed: by Barbara Davis, Co-Chair

Executive Director Update – J. Newcomb reported that she has

- Attending weekly meetings of the National Cohort COVID-19 Artist group as well as the Cultural Advocacy Group since March.
- Participating in the AFTA National Service Organizations and HENTF meetings. This increased participation gives NCAPER more visibility.
- Worked with Mollie and Michael as a panelist for Rauschenberg grants. Very interesting and very compelling stories and a thoughtful experience, I am proud to have been a part of it.
- Working with Tom Clareson have been working with Dance/USA member organizations including Dance Theater of Harlem, Alvin Ailey, Gibney Dance and a company of dancers with disabilities. Very interesting and compelling conversations and how to safely re-open and what the timeline is and safety issues for staff to audiences.
- **Program Associate – M. O'Toole** gave a marketing and social media report. Asked all Steering Committee members to like and share our NCAPER social media. It's a simple way to expand our reach and work together as a network. She proposed producing one-minute videos of each SC member introducing one of the Funding Principles which could be an engaging way to broaden our visibility and reach and direct folks back to our website and resources etc.

NASAA Update – Pam Breaux: The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the national service organization for the country's 56 state and jurisdictional arts councils (SAAs). NASAA is supporting and standing with members individually and collectively during this time of crisis. We're responding to member inquiries each day and supporting states and jurisdictions as they develop and enable strategies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic evolves, so does the work of SAAs, and the status of their rapidly evolving practices changes by the day. Here are some trends:

- 40+ states have launched CARES Act grant programs, with more coming online every day. States have posted related grant guidelines throughout April and early May. Many state level funding decisions are happening this month; a few early funding decisions occurred in late April, with some happening in June. Dollars are flowing from SAAs to constituents throughout this month and in June, with some extending into July, depending upon individual state circumstances (like the need to seek state legislative authority to expend new funds, etc.)
- Beyond the CARES Act federal funding, SAAs are dedicating state funds (and other resources) to responding to COVID-19, as well. Many have retrofitted their grantmaking programs to be of aid during the crisis (like converting project grant support to operating grants).
- SAAs have streamlined programs in response to the pandemic. Tactics include short application windows, streamlining panel review processes, minimizing adjudication criteria, abbreviating applications forms, etc. There's a clear trend to minimize red tape for applicants.
- SAAs are taking a variety of approaches to making grant dollars available efficiently and effectively, including folding the funds into existing programs, creating new programs, or blending the two. Most states have created new/designated programs.

Beyond grantmaking, SAAs have employed a host of special services to assist the field. Over 110 special services have been developed. Examples include the following:

- Developing virtual marketplaces for the arts (Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina)
- Engaging in state level impact research (Utah and California)
- Providing additional communications vehicles for stakeholders to connect to the state agency and each other (all states—this includes using video conferencing vehicles to be more connected)
- Creating new professional development strategies, like Indiana, for example, where a rolling series of video training modules have been designed to help arts organizations and artists better understand the current environment and provide insights for adjusting practices.
- Providing guidance on reopening strategies (Oklahoma, Texas, Utah and others)

State and jurisdictional arts agencies themselves are concerned about the impact of the economic crisis on their own FY 2020 and 2021 budgets. Here's what currently happening

- In most cases, SAAs are teleworking full time.
- Some states have already enacted current year spending freezes.
- Some states have already enacted furloughs.
- Legislative sessions continue, and as new revenue estimating forecasts become available, legislators will use this updated information to appropriate. The next 4-6 weeks will tell us a great deal about the severity of state budget cuts for FY 2021. This week NASAA is initiating a new state revenues survey to track FY 2021 budgets.

Links to relevant NASAA resources follow:

[COVID Resources for State Arts Agencies](#), includes information on federal policies, state arts agency programs, reopening resources, equity and antidiscrimination, facilitating online meetings and NASAA member updates.

Examples of selected SAA COVID-19 responses (From NASAA Notes):

[Washington, Texas, South Carolina, Vermont: State CARES Act Arts Programs](#)

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act included \$75 million in COVID-19 relief funds to be distributed through the National Endowment for the Arts. To achieve broad and inclusive access to federal funds, Congress requires 40% of the Arts Endowment's grant budget to be allocated to state arts agencies and regional arts organizations—a...

[Colorado, Iowa: Student Engagement during COVID-19](#)

In addition to supporting general public participation in the arts during COVID-19 shutdowns, state arts agencies are finding creative ways to address the specific needs of students and children. Colorado and Iowa offer two examples. Colorado Face Mask Design Challenge Face mask design by Mack, age 9, from Centennial, Colorado Face...

[Indiana, Massachusetts: Stabilizing the Arts during \(and after\) COVID-19](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic will have wide-ranging ripple effects for the creative sector. Artists and arts organizations must not only adapt to immediate losses of income, they also must reposition themselves for an uncertain future. Many state arts agencies are organizing technical assistance and education programs designed to support sound planning as well as present-day triage....

[Massachusetts, Delaware, Rhode Island: Sustaining Public Engagement during COVID-19](#)

Cultural participation is a crucial ingredient for maintaining social cohesion, bolstering community resiliency and finding hope during times of crisis. To help artists and arts organizations facilitate arts engagement despite widespread COVID-19 lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, many state arts agencies are promoting virtual arts events that allow individuals and families to experience the arts online....

[Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina: Virtual Marketplaces and COVID-19](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic is placing severe restrictions on public gatherings and physical interactions. Those limits in turn curtail opportunities for traditional face-to-face commerce. To help the arts sector address this new reality, state arts agencies are establishing virtual marketplaces and helping artists develop new platforms for online retail. Kentucky, Maryland and North Carolina all offer...

[Utah, California: COVID-19 State Impact Research](#)

While a variety of national surveys are attempting to assess the effects of COVID-19 on the arts, many state arts agencies are conducting state level research to get an early read on the economic impact of the pandemic. Such surveys are being used to inform policy dialogues with state elected officials as well as to...

[Maine, Arizona, Colorado: COVID-19 Grant Adaptations](#)

State arts agencies are making rapid changes to their grant programs to help the arts field adjust to unforeseen circumstances stemming from COVID-19. These tactics include accelerating grant payments, extending deadlines, waiving matching requirements, converting project awards to operating support, and revising budget parameters to allow more flexibility in how award dollars are used.

Discussion:

Tom asked **Pam** to share some of this information or other that NASAA is releasing. Will you share them with PAR? She is happy to share the broader information, and all is highlighted in the NASAA monthly publication.

Ruby mentioned that AFTA, under re-opening and resources page, there are great documents on state and even cities that she will share. Also posted a link to state and city activity, as well. **Ted**: How many states are working with their governors?

Pam: There is some information on this, but it is a mixed bag. I will say that not every state has an arts person at the table and some states do. For example, some states the Arts are part of a broader department, so they are not specifically at the table, but represented by the department head. **Ted**: Are there any discussions about loan mechanisms that states have or economic development tools that the Arts sector has not had access to?

Pam: Our role has been the wayfinding for SAA to find their place to connect with the right people on behalf of their organizations as well as the new resources available. Again, it's a mixed bag. Some SAA's have a place at the table, but an equal amount do not.

Americans for the Arts Report – R. Lopez Harper : Similar to Pam, I'll report a broad sweep to track where everything is moving.

- We are in the process of launching a case making campaign to assist State agencies that are under the threat of elimination.
- What we are finding at the local level in a lot of instances is arts agencies who have developed relationships with their local government are at the table and are able to advocate. For example, Santa Monica, was slated for elimination but due to the work they have done on building their relationship with City government, she was able to remove them from elimination to 40% cuts instead of total elimination. We know we need to take cuts, but we do not need to be eliminated. We are part of the community on both sides of this. Philadelphia, news we have all heard, we are going to see staff loss. In response to all of this we are sharing **10 reasons to invest in your local arts agency**. The ones that are under the attack are not the ones we can help except to advocate that they not be totally eliminated. To have the loss of infrastructure at the local, county, state level is going to be catastrophic if we are not able to preserve this backbone of the arts and culture sector around the country. Given that, most agencies are going to be vital in the re-opening and reconstruction of communities around the country and really that is our current focus.
- We are rolling out talking points to support arts education and programming as cities are under siege and find monies to support essential services.
- We are also looking at the Heroes act, NEA an NEH money, and looking at the dynamics of that.
- AFTA continues to lobby for friendly policy shifts for artists and federal programs.
- We are going to be producing some additional field education tools and continued office hours to help artists navigate the CARES act programs. Extending that service.
- Producing a video series on demand that is a federal programs primer, about what the basics are you need to know to navigate all these resources, as a way to get more information out into the field for artists.
- Arts agencies that are funded through occupancy tax are severely at risk with rolling impact. There is an immediate or long-term impact from programs funded by this tourism-based income in cities. We are trying to track all of this.

Ruby introduced **Jerelle Jenkins** to talk about the resource center updates. **Jerelle@AFTA**: We have updated our COVID Response and Resource page with a Reopening and Resources tab, featuring Guidance and Phased Reopening plans by State. We are especially looking for reopening plans as they become public so that we can add to the respective State. Also, we are looking for other official Guidance on a National level as well as what reopening plans are being published for the performing arts and museum sectors as these are some of the first entities to be reopen.

- The COVID Response and Resource page also features a Mental Health/Equity tab with articles and resources ranging from a variety of topics on emotional health and wellbeing and racial equity. We are especially looking to fill this particular section of the website with resources that people can access and refer to, as mental health and equity are severely at risk during this time of COVID-19.

Reporting around the square:

CERF+ - J. Hafferman: Cerf is continuing to work with Artist Relief grant rounds for craft artists. We are also fine tuning what our Covid19 funds look like, trying to create a package of support with both immediate and long term and hoping to have more information. Right now, dealing with artists who have had direct medical impact. Then data collection and advocacy: what artists are receiving. Putting out resources, and emails and stay in touch with artists.

PAR – T. Claeson: Continuing with Webinars and our planning, network and circuit rider grants are starting to get some applications coming in.

NYFA - M. Royce: We are continuing what we are doing. Putting out a lot of funds for individual artists. We are looking internally how we can bolster our own infrastructure. We are announcing another emergency relief fund in tandem with CARES ACT and NYSCA which will be for people who live outside the city. Reaching rural areas. Looking at access to technology etc., it is not a lot of money, but it is something. Really, we are just continuing to do our work.

We have been trying to think about how, besides money, we can help artists. Recently started sending out gift kits of paints/supplies to artists. An invisible thing that is happening, but I wanted to tell you about it here as a way to help besides money.

NPN – S. Atkins: We are dealing with our Artist Relief fund, closed the application last week, and funds now being dispersed. I am looking at the data, analyzing data, to make sure our reach and impact was with the segment of the community that we wanted to reach. Also working on local level collaborative responses. Creative response of New Orleans. We are coming together as a sector which is inspiring. Trying to change the culture of how at the municipal level, arts and culture, is supported. We are eager and hopeful this will continue.

Joan Mitchell Foundation – K. Takeda: Working to carve out a phase two relief funds for individual artists and identified \$500,000 we can release. Looking at how we are going to release those and figuring out how to distribute them and how we might contribute to artists in New Orleans. We are participating in local conversations for that and that has been really helpful. We will have nearly doubled our grants out the door this year. Also moving forward with our commitment to our existing fellowship program. Also looking at the strategies for our center in New Orleans to reopen and the fellowships/artist residencies at the center.

NEA - A. Mathis: Direct grants side of the arts endowment, all applications are in and we are moving into the adjudication part of the process.

SOUTH ARTS – S. Surkamer: Almost finished with the quick assist Jazz Awards across the country. Most have received their funds. Trying to reach every region and rural areas will be done very soon. With our CARES money, working with the states so we can do something complimentary, we will be releasing our guidelines next week. Adjusting our programmatic work to be done from afar so that our work can continue in this environment.

The Actor's Fund - B. Davis: We continue to manage the eleven funds, in addition to our own and about 11 million that have gone out and continue to be administered. It continues to be busy but leveled out some. One other conversation we are having is around health insurance for both freelancers but what is happening to the union health funds. These are devastating times for the tapped funds - as some of you know some of them are looking at bankruptcy by the first quarter of next year. There is a piece of legislation that would provide full cobra coverage. Actor's equity 6% of the membership is losing coverage every month. These funds we are using could save 100,000 of lives by keeping them covered. A lot of changes to the plans are

being made. They are pretty devastating plans for individuals, changing the quality of the insurance. The drugs may go generic and not cover HIV drugs for example. We are also looking at sideline jobs for artists so that they can support themselves through this next year.

Ted Berger: I am increasingly involved in how we can create long term policies - find new ways of surviving. Trying to think through the next stage ideas and invent long term strategies with a cross sector approach. This is bad and we are going to need to find new ways of surviving.

Amy Schwartzman: Independently working on the same concerns as Ted. Also working with Three Calls in NY on insurance issues and coverage. I will say in any reopening plans working with workers compensation insurance, and business interruption insurance, all agencies are going to be affected. Maybe next time I can give a short update on what my research is turning up. Also, Cultural workers who are independent workers, hired by cultural organizations, like me, are not a very visible constituency within and outside the sector. There are some real issues with them losing work as well.

Mollie Quinlan-Hayes: Thanked Jan for sending out the ESA reopening guide. We are also working on Performing Arts focused webinars on reopening and a webinar on presenter and booking agents - how to have collaborative conversation on rescheduling etc., so that artists don't get the short end of the stick on those negotiations. I think that is a healthy conversation to have.

ADJOURNMENT

Barbara thanked Jan and everyone. The discussion on opening membership on the steering committee will be postponed until the June 12 meeting. Jan thanked Jerelle.

B. Davis adjourned the meeting at 4:01

Respectfully submitted,

Meghan O'Toole and Jan Newcomb