

Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. III 2014

Massive Arts Funding Win in Florida: More than 350 Percent Increase!

Thanks to the actions of arts advocates like you, the Florida legislature passed and Gov. Rick Scott has signed into law one of the largest single-state arts funding increases in history! Increasing from \$9 million last year to more than \$43 million, the **Florida Division of Cultural Affairs** has recouped previous years' losses and now has the ability to fund more arts organizations in Florida, while also undertaking special programs and projects. Further, the \$43 million reflects the largest appropriation that the state arts agency has ever received.

The \$43 million is divided up into several categories: Cultural and Museum Grants (\$24,166,047), Specific Cultural Projects (\$1,165,486), Cultural Facilities Grants (\$10,781,584), and Cultural Endowment Program (\$6,960,000). The Florida Cultural Alliance led the



Americans for the Arts presented Florida Cultural Alliance President Sherron Long with the Alene Valkanas State Arts Advocacy Award.

charge in the recent funding victory, but it has not been quick or easy. "It is a marathon, not a sprint," said President Sherron Long. She knows all about marathons, having served as the Alliance's president since 1983 where she has seen funding go up and down—but never this far this quickly. "We are extremely appreciative for all the hard work of advocates from throughout the state and to the Florida legislature and governor for restoring Florida's investment in this creative industry so vital to our state's economic and qualitative growth." The key priority will now be to sustain the \$43 million in next year's appropriation when the political climate will be different—and when the governor signing bills into law might change. But, for now, advocates can be proud of their accomplishments.

Advocates Save Tucson's Arts Funding

Recently, crisis hit Tucson, AZ's arts community when the new City Manager Richard Miranda proposed a 75 percent cut in city funding for the arts and culture. Americans for the Arts Action Fund and the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) joined together to oppose this draconian cut in city support. Over a three week timeframe, we identified and encouraged local Tucson advocates to contact their local elected officials and urge them to restore funding. Defying all expectations, the mayor, city manager, city clerk, and the six city council members each received more than 775 e-mails!

Normally, if a local elected official received five or ten e-mails, they would be drawn to action, but 775 is unprecedented. After the messages, the city manager contacted TPAC and informed them that the 75 percent cut would be reduced to a 12.5 percent cut, which brought the cut to the arts in line proportionately with other city agencies budget reductions. In order to formally register citizen opposition to the cuts for the public records, TPAC presented the mayor and city council the Arts Action Fund petition with more than 1,500 Tucson-member signatures. Rest assured—it will be



TPAC Tucson Pima Arts Council staff with the Arts Action Fund petition.

a long time before city officials in Tucson underestimate the power and fortitude of the local arts and cultural community. (City Manager Miranda resigned on July 31, 2014.)

Message from the President

This June, Americans for the Arts gathered 1,000 local arts leaders in Nashville to celebrate accomplishments over the last year and gain skills and knowledge to pursue a future agenda as advocates for the arts in America.

I had the pleasure of visiting with musician and arts advocate Ben Folds (Ben Folds Five, The Sing-Off) in Music City. He graciously invited us into his recording studio, which used to be the original RCA music studio. We saw firsthand the heart and core of the recording industry, which greatly contributes to the Nashville economy. Ben invited dozens of industry artists to learn more about Americans for the Arts and the Arts Action Fund and to inspire them to get involved with arts advocacy efforts. During our convention, Ben also discussed his role in the arts—from a budding songwriter giving performances to help our country heal after September 11, 2001 to entertaining us as with a celebration of accomplishments in

communities across the country, in state legislatures nationwide, and on Capitol Hill.

Simultaneously, some of our arts education advocates celebrated a local success story with a site visit to one of Nashville's premier schools, the Pearl Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School. This school exemplified what Ben had been talking about—the role of the arts as a driver of community engagement.

This is why we are expanding our unified arts education advocacy effort on the local, state, and federal levels. Part of our state expansion will be supporting the adoption of the National Core Arts Standards. In early June, I participated in a national conference call to help reveal—and voice my support for—these standards, which were written by educators, for educators over the last three years. It is our belief that the



Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch and Ben Folds during the 2014 Annual Convention in Nashville.

arts are core to every child's education in America in order to equip students for a 21st century world, which is why we pushed for the inclusion of media arts as one of the five core arts disciplines. We want to ensure that students in every community across America will develop creative thinking and problem solving skills that will benefit their future jobs and our shared economy for generations to come. This is why Americans for the Arts has launched a campaign with our partners for the adoption or adaptation of these standards in all 50 states. Stay tuned for more.



Nominated, Confirmed, Appointed: Welcome New NEA Chairman Dr. Jane Chu!

On June 19, 2014, Dr. Jane Chu was officially sworn in as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). After being nominated by the White House in February, her congressional confirmation process was swift and fully supported in the U.S. Senate.



"She knows firsthand how art can open minds, transform lives, and revitalize communities, and believes deeply in the importance of the arts to our national culture."

—President Barack Obama



"She's an accomplished leader in Kansas City and we are fortunate to have her nomination."

—Ranking Member on Senate Authorizing Committee in charge of vetting White House nominations Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)



"Building on her background in public service, education, music, and the arts, Dr. Chu is uniquely qualified to lead the Endowment."

—Dr. Chu's Hometown Senator, Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO)

Shaping Federal Arts Policy

The Arts Action Fund monitors arts policy at the federal level and helps bring citizens' voices to the table when important arts issues are debated. For detailed legislative updates, please visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/news-room/legislative-news.

Good Tax News for Nonprofits

The U.S. House passed a bill 277-130 to make permanent a series of charitable tax provisions including the IRA Charitable Rollover, and extended the deadline for claiming charitable donations through April 15. The Senate has not taken similar action yet.

Budget Cycle Advances

The U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved legislation to provide level funding at \$146 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), only after pro-arts members fought back a proposed 5 percent funding cut. Two weeks later, the Senate Appropriations Committee proposed a slightly higher level at \$150 million.

Turnaround Arts Expands

On May 20, students and artists gathered in the White House with President Obama and the First Lady to announce the quadrupling in size of the Turnaround Arts Initiative, which brings arts education into low-performing schools. Americans for the Arts is the fiscal manager of the program led by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Learn more at www.turnaroundarts.pcah.gov.

Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

State and Local Arts Agencies Secure Funding Increases

State legislatures have now finalized their 2014-2015 fiscal year arts budgets including Florida's major increase to \$43 million. There is good news to report for arts appropriations across the country!

California

On June 20, Gov. Jerry Brown signed the California state budget, approving a one-time increase of \$5 million to the California Arts Council, which in addition to its normal \$1 million appropriation will bring its total funding for this year to about \$6 million.

Michigan

On June 30, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder signed the final \$53 billion state budget, with a \$10.15 million

allocation for the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs intact—a 25 percent increase from the previous year.

South Carolina

In South Carolina, Gov. Nikki Haley did not veto the South Carolina Arts Commission budget line for the first time in four years. While the South Carolina Arts Commission did not seek an increase for its state funding, it did support an increase for the Arts Curricular Innovation Grants Program within the Department of Education's budget. The program was increased from its original \$1.18 million and received a recurring increase of \$300,000 from the state senate, which will bring the total to nearly \$1.5 million.

Ohio

The Greater Columbus Arts Council will receive \$5.8 million from city funds this year. Within the allocation is the \$100,000 budget for the new Community Impact Grant program as well as the Columbus Film Commission. In addition, Mayor Coleman signed an executive order to establish a public arts program with a budget of \$250,000. Columbus also instituted other new arts programs for 2014, including the Community and Street Performer program receiving \$20,000.



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SIXTH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
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PAC Update



Nashville Supports the Arts Action Fund PAC

Dozens of Arts Action Fund members gathered in Nashville during the 2014 Americans for the Arts Annual Convention for a fundraiser to support the PAC on June 13. Former National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Bill Ivey delivered moving remarks about convincing elected officials to invest public funds into the arts. Ivey stated that the most important reason to support the Arts Action Fund PAC is because we are the only PAC in the country that is securing “pre-committed candidates” to support the arts. He explained that these pre-committed candidates will hopefully transition to become pro-arts legislators in Congress. With the mid-term election season coming up, we are vetting many new candidates and supporting the re-election bids for several proven incumbent arts leaders looking to return to Congress.



Former Chairman of the NEA Bill Ivey speaks at the Arts Action Fund PAC reception during the 2014 Annual Convention in Nashville.

So far this election cycle we have given \$26,000 to the following 19 candidates, and hope to support 80 candidates total this cycle.

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| Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK) | Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy III (D-MA) | Rep. Dave Reichert (R-WA) |
| Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA) | Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) | Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) |
| Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI) | Rep. Nita M. Lowey (D-NY) | Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY) |
| Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-NY) | Rep. James P. Moran (D-VA) | Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) |
| Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-IA) | Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) | Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO) |
| Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) | Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA) | Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) |

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Americans for the Arts. We engage citizens in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in the arts. Arts Action Fund members are citizen activists who are committed to helping make certain that arts-friendly public policies are adopted at every level of government and in the private sector. Arts Action News is delivered four times a year to supporters of the Arts Action Fund. Executive Director, Nina Ozlu Tunceli. www.ArtsActionFund.org.