AFTACON™

Scan the QR Code to see Americans for the Arts current legislative priorities.

Tips for Effective Advocacy

ADVOCACY IS FOR EVERYONE!

Your success depends on consistency and showing a key decision maker that you are a resource. Cultivate the relationship so that they TRUST you, RESPECT your opinions (even if they don't agree), and SEEK YOUR ADVICE. These are vital to your success.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY

1. Present your issue in a way that allows the elected official to say "YES."
2. Do your research to understand what they value.
3. Being successful depends on a unified message, purpose and strategy.
4. Get to know your elected officials and become a resource.
5. Convey how your activities contribute to the greater good.

SAMPLE ARTS TOPICS THAT OFTEN RESONATE ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM

1. The arts are key to economic development (urban and rural).
2. Arts education helps children thrive.
3. Arts are important to the health of our active military, veterans, and children.

NAVIGATING A POLARIZED POLITICAL WORLD

1. Focus on pro-arts policy, not personality.
2. The arts are nonpartisan.
3. The arts contribute to communities and the economy, providing important jobs and tax revenue.

Americans for the Arts | NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS | ONE ALBUQUERQUE arts & culture

For more information, please visit **AFTACON.org**

ADVOCACY RULES

- It is ok to say "I don't know the answer to that question, but I will get that answer and be back in contact with you." (This is a great tool to set up your next meeting or interaction.)
- No data without a story and no story without data.
- Make sure to "make the ask." Never leave a meeting with an unclear message. If the decision maker agrees to support, then thank them!

DURING MEETINGS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS OR THEIR STAFF

- Discuss your top three issues and explain why they are important.
- Explain the issues in simple terms and include your personal story!
- Bring written summaries of your issues and include your contact information so that the staff can reach you later.

BE STRATEGIC

- Demonstrate how your issues are relevant to the state and legislative district.
- Be responsive and promptly follow up with a thank you note and any other information you have promised.
- Meetings with staff are effective because they advise the decision maker.
- You will probably know more about arts issues than they do. You are the expert, especially on district programs.

YEAR-ROUND ADVOCACY

- Elected Officials, especially in election years, are always looking to meet with constituents or to attend an organized event.
- Call the district office to make an appointment. Consider also inviting them to tour a facility or watch a performance.

Questions? Contact Americans for the Arts' Government Affairs Department at
advocacy@artsusa.org
Find your elected officials and take action at the **Americans for the Arts Action Center**
www.americansforthearts.org/advocate/action-center

Americans for the Arts

10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2026

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. The arts also strengthen our communities socially, educationally, economically, and improve health and well-being. If you believe everyone should have the opportunity to participate in the arts and every child should be receiving a quality arts education, use the following 10 reasons to show why an investment in artists, creative workers, and arts organizations is vital to the nation's health and prosperity.

1. **Arts strengthen the economy**. The nation's arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is a $1.2 trillion industry that supports 5.4 million jobs (2023). That is 4.2% of the nation's economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as Transportation, Agriculture, and Utilities. Similar results are found at the **state level** (source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). The arts **accelerate economic recovery**: a growth in arts employment has a positive and causal effect on overall employment. The nation's **nonprofit arts and culture industry** alone generated $151.7 billion in economic activity in 2022—spending by arts organizations *and their audiences*—which supported 2.6 million jobs and generated $29.1 billion in government revenue.

2. **Arts drive revenue to local businesses.** Arts attendees spend an average of $38.46 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local businesses. 30% of attendees come from outside the county in which the arts event took place; those non-local attendees average $60.57 in spending beyond admission, and 77% said they traveled to the community specifically to attend that arts and culture event.

3. **Arts unify communities**. 72% of Americans believe "The arts provide shared experiences with people of different races, ethnicities, ages, beliefs, and identities." 63% agree that the arts "help me understand other cultures in my community better"—perspectives observed across all demographic and economic categories.

4. **Arts strengthen mental health and well-being**. Just 45 minutes of art making can **lower the stress hormone** cortisol by 25%. More than half of Americans (60%) say the arts have "helped them cope during times of mental or emotional distress," and 69% believe the arts "lift me up beyond everyday experiences."

5. **Arts and culture are tourism drivers**. Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic culture experiences. 70% of Americans agree, "The arts improve the image and identity of my community," and 53% say, "When planning a vacation, I consider the destination's arts and culture experiences when deciding where to visit."

6. **Arts improve academic performance**. Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out rates. These academic benefits are reaped by students across all socio-economic strata. **Nine-in-10 Americans** believe that every pre-K-12 student should be receiving an arts education; 83% support government funding for arts education.

7. **Arts spark creativity and innovation**. Creativity is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders—per the Conference Board's *Ready to Innovate* report—with 72% saying creativity is of "high importance" when hiring. Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged as an *arts maker* than other scientists.

8. **Arts have social impact**. University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to greater civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.

9. **Arts improve healthcare.** One-half of the nation's healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff. 78% deliver these programs because of their healing benefits to patients—shorter hospital stays, better pain management, and less medication. 75% of Americans say if their doctor wrote them a prescription to participate in the arts as a way to improve their physical or mental health, they would likely follow that recommendation.

10. **Arts for the health and well-being of our military**. The arts can heal the mental, physical, and moral injuries of war for military servicemembers and Veterans—who rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments.

Americans for the Arts | ARTS ACTION FUND

2026 FEDERAL LEGISLATION & OUR ASKS

Legislative Summary	Congressional Ask
FY 2027 Funding National Endowment for the Arts The President's FY 2027 Budget Request proposed minimal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), with the purpose of closing the agency. In FY 2026, Congress appropriated $207 million for the agency in a bipartisan fashion. Arts advocates are requesting a modest inflationary increase to $213 million that is below the current national inflation rate. ***Read AFTA's Congressional Written Testimony in Support of NEA/NEH FY 2027 Funding at bit.ly/AFTALegAgenda***	**Ask** Members of Congress to please appropriate **$213 million** each in the FY 2027 Interior Appropriations bill for the NEA and NEH and to vote against any floor amendments that would eliminate or reduce funding. **Take Action** at ***ArtsActionFund.org/Arts-Action-Center***
FY 2027 Funding Arts Education The arts education community is advocating for a well-rounded education which includes adequately funding specific parts of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Arts education is important to the education of all students and should be fully funded by Congress to ensure access. The arts education community is concerned about the recent Interagency Agreements with the Department of Labor. Congress should use its oversight authority to ensure that all FY 2026 Title funds reach State and local educational agencies in a timely manner. ***Read AFTA's Congressional Written Testimony in Support of Arts Education FY 2027 Funding at bit.ly/AFTALegAgenda***	**Ask** Members of Congress to please support robust funding in the FY 2027 Labor-Health-Education Appropriations bill for the Assistance for Arts Education grant program and Titles I, II, and IV funding streams to support arts education access for students across the country. • **$40 million** for the Assistance for Arts Education Grants • **$18.68 billion** for Title I Part A (funding for schools with high populations of low-income families) • **$3 billion** for Title II Part A (funding for professional development for teachers and school leaders) • **$1.6 billion** for Title IV Part A (funding for student support services and academic enrichment) • **$2.09 billion** for Title IV Part B (21st Century Community Learning Centers) **Take Action** at ***ArtsActionFund.org/Arts-Action-Center***
Restoring the BEA Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA) The BEA announced it would cease regular production of the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA). The ACPSA, developed in 2012 in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, provides the most authoritative federal data on the arts economy. ***Read AFTA's Congressional Written Testimony in Support of the ACPSA FY 2027 Funding at bit.ly/AFTALegAgenda***	**Ask** Members of Congress to please appropriate **$1 million** for the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account in the FY 2027 Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill to ensure the continuation of data collection and reporting. We are also asking Congress for an authorization for the ACPSA. **Take Action** at ***ArtsActionFund.org/Arts-Action-Center***
FY 2027 Funding the Institute of Museum and Library Services The President's FY 2027 Budget Request proposed minimal funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to close the agency. In FY 2026, Congress appropriated $42.8 million to the IMLS Office of Museums Services and $212.5 million to the IMLS Library Services Technology Act. Arts and cultural advocates are requesting continued funding for the IMLS to support US museums and libraries in FY 2027.	**Ask** Members of Congress to please appropriate **$287 million** for the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the FY 2027 Labor-Health-Education Appropriations bill to ensure access to sites of cultural preservation and experiential learning in the more than 20,000 museums and 123,000 libraries across the country. • **$55 million** for the Office of Museums Services • **$232 million** for the Library Services Technology Act **Take Action** at ***ArtsActionFund.org/Arts-Action-Center***

Americans for the Arts | ARTS ACTION FUND

2026 FEDERAL LEGISLATION & OUR ASKS

Legislative Summary	Congressional Ask
Performing Artist Tax Parity Act (S. 1121/H.R. 721) This legislation would update the qualified performing artist deduction for business expenses (headshots, costumes, acting coaches, travel for auditions, portfolios, photos, resumes). Currently, only performing artists with incomes less than $16,000 per year can qualify. PATPA increases that income to $100,000. The help is necessary as expenses can sum in total to 25 to 35 percent of income for performing artists.	Ask Members of Congress to co-sponsor the legislation and support the inclusion of this provision into any moving tax bills this year. **Read the full issue brief at *bit.ly/LegPriorities2026***
HBCU Arts Act (S. 4496/H.R. 2664) Clarifies that federal funds that go to HBCUs can be used for arts programs, arts education programs, and preservation of historic art.	Ask Members of Congress to co-sponsor the legislation. **Read the full issue brief at *bit.ly/LegPriorities2026***
Arts Education for All Act (H.R. 2485) The broadest arts education policy bill ever introduced in Congress, this bill includes key provisions that will support and encourage arts education and programming for youth and adults in early learning centers, K-12 Schools, and juvenile justice facilities.	Ask House Members of Congress to co-sponsor the legislation. **Read the full issue brief at *bit.ly/LegPriorities2026***
Saving Transit Art Resources (STAR) Act (S. 4354/H.R. 8399) The legislation would once again allow local transit authorities to incorporate art into federally funded transit projects and facilities.	Ask Members of Congress to co-sponsor this legislation and support inclusion in any moving transportation bills this year. **Read the full issue brief at *bit.ly/LegPriorities2026***
Creative Workforce Investment Act (To Be Introduced) The bill establishes a $300 million grant program at the Department of Labor for artist workers to support arts and creative workforce initiatives that create publicly accessible art while employing individuals in the local community. This bill is scheduled to be introduced later this year by **Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM)** and **Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA)**.	Ask House Members of Congress to sign-on as co-sponsors of the legislation once the bill is introduced later this year. **Read the full issue brief at *bit.ly/LegPriorities2026***

For the latest **Status of the FY 2027 Federal Arts Appropriations Cycle Chart,** please visit ***www.ArtsActionFund.org/federal-arts-and-culture-and-arts-education-funding-asks-fy27***

Scan this **QR code** to find the PDF version of this document online.

Status of the FY27 Federal Arts Appropriations Cycle

(updated as of 5/21/26)

Key Federally Funded Arts Programs & Agencies	President Trump's Proposed FY26 Budget *10/1/25 - 9/30/26*	U.S. House FY26 Approved Appropriations in Sub/Full Committee	U.S. Senate FY26 Approved Appropriations in Sub/Full Committee	Final Enacted FY26 Funding *10/1/25 - 9/30/26 (series of minibus bills)*	President Trump's Proposed FY27 Budget *10/1/26 - 9/30/27*	U.S. House FY27 Approved Appropriations in Sub/Full Committee	Arts Advocate FY27 Ask!
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)	$29 million *	$135 million	$207 million	$207 million	$29 million *	$135 million	$213 million
National Endowment for Humanities (NEH)	$38 million *	$135 million	$207 million	$207 million	$38 million *	$135 million	$213 million
Bureau of Economic Analysis Arts & Culture Satellite Acct.	---	---	---	---	---	$0	$1 million
Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)	$6 million *	$291.8 million	$291.8 million	$291.8 million	$6 million *	TBD	Museums: $55 million Libraries: $232 million
Assistance for Arts Education	$0	$0	$31.5 million	$36.5 million	$0	TBD	$40 million
Education Title I-A (Ed. for disadvantaged kids)	$18.41 billion	$14.6 billion	$18.46 billion	$18.43 billion	$18.43 billion	TBD	$18.63 billion
Education Title II-A (professional development)	$0	$0	$2.19 billion	$2.19 billion	$0	TBD	$3 billion
Education Title IV-A (Student support)	$0	$1.385 billion	$1.33 billion	$1.38 billion	$0	TBD	$1.6 billion
Education Title IV-B (21st Century Community Learning Centers)	$0	$1.33 billion	$1.33 billion	$1.33 billion	$0	TBD	$2.09 billion

** President Trump proposed minimally funding the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute of Museum and Library Services in his FY26 and FY27 Administration budgets in order to finalize operations to close down these important cultural agencies.*

Federal Candidate Survey

2026 Election Cycle

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Candidate: ______________________ **State:** ______________

Party: ______________________ **District:** ______________

1. Personal Background

76% of Americans believe the arts are personally important to them. Do you or an immediate family member have experience in the arts? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Musical ☐ Visual Arts ☐ Dance ☐ Theatre ☐ Photography ☐ Literary Arts ☐ Media Arts

☐ Other ______________ ☐ No personal background

Please Describe ______________________________

2. Community Engagement

Have you attended, partnered with, or supported any arts or cultural organizations in your district/state in the past two years? Please describe.

____

3. Policy Priorities

What are your top three federal policy priorities for your district/state?

____

4. Economic Growth

What federal policies would you prioritize to support economic growth and small businesses in your district or state, including sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and arts and cultural organizations that contribute to local economies?

____

5. Education

What are your top priorities for strengthening education outcomes in your district or state, and what role, if any, should arts education or creative learning opportunities—from pre-K through higher education—play in federal education policy?

____

6. Workforce and Independent Workers

Many Americans work as freelancers, independent contractors, or in other non-traditional employment arrangements—including artists and creative professionals. What federal policies would you support to improve economic stability, access to health and retirement benefits, and professional opportunities for these workers?

____

Please e-mail the completed survey to Morgan Furnari at mfurnari@artsusa.org
or submit your responses to the survey online at www.ArtsActionFund.org/Federal-Candidate-Survey-2026