



**The State of the Field:
A Look at Statewide Arts Advocacy and
Service Organizations**

Presented by
Jay H. Dick
Director, State Arts Policy
Americans for the Arts

State Arts Action Network
The Jurys Hotel
Washington, DC



**The State of the Field:
A Look at Statewide Arts Advocacy and
Service Organizations**

A research report prepared for Americans for the Arts by:
Julia Fabris McBride
Community Collaborations
Chicago, Illinois



Purpose of the report

- Present an overview of how statewide advocacy is conducted and services are delivered to the arts communities in the 50 states and the District of Columbia
- Identify the needs of the field
- Recommend ways for SAAN to use its resources to increase the impact of individual organizations & the field as a whole



Methodology

- Based on interviews with leaders of SAAN member organizations or state agency directors
- Additional information collected through surveys of member organizations and review of member websites.
- Research conducted between August 19 and December 29 2004.



Organization types

- Forty-one states and the District of Columbia have at least one statewide nonprofit advocacy or service organization
- 12 states have either one organization with a mission that includes both advocacy and service *or* closely-connected sister organizations with overlapping boards and a shared executive director.

Page 3 of Report



Organization types

- 12 states sustain two completely distinct organizations
 - In all but a few cases, the two organizations share one or more board members and collaborate on advocacy campaigns and training.

Page 3 of Report



Organization types

- Minnesota alone has three distinct multi-disciplinary statewide groups.
- An advocacy mission guides the sole statewide in 13 states and the District of Columbia.
 - Responding to constituent needs, there is a trend among these groups toward service-delivery.

Page 3 of Report



Organization types

- Nevada's arts community faces the unique challenge of unallied statewide advocacy groups
- In California there are 26 statewide organizations whose missions include legislative advocacy
 - only California Arts Advocates and the California Assembly for Local Arts are included in this study

Page 3 of Report



Organization types

- New Mexico is the only state that has an assembly of local arts agencies and no advocacy group
 - However this group conducts advocacy activities
- The Wyoming Arts Alliance exists primarily to facilitate block-booking
- The Vermont Arts Council is a nonprofit org that also serves as the state arts agency.

Page 3 of Report



Organization types

- 9 states have no statewide service or advocacy group.
 - Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia
- Several states are attempting to organize a non-profit organization.
 - Connecticut
 - Oklahoma

Page 3 of Report



THE SURVEYS



Survey methodology

The online survey requested information about:

- Organizational structure
- Board
- Staff
- Mission and purpose
- Revenue and expenditures
- Membership
- Programs & services
- Advocacy



Survey methodology

- *This report is based upon the survey responses from 58 nonprofit SAAN member organizations*
- Although government agencies, such as the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, are active SAAN members, in an effort to compare apple to apples, this survey report focuses only on private nonprofit organizations



Organizational structure

Of the 58 organizations responding to this survey:

- 34 are nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
- 13 function as both a 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organization
- One functions as both a 501(c)(3) and an unincorporated advocacy group
- 6 are nonprofit 501(c)(4) organizations
- 4 are unincorporated

Page 12 of Report



Organizational structure

- 30 say they are the only multi-disciplinary statewide arts advocacy or service group
- 19 say there is another group in the state

Page 12 of Report



Board members

- Average number: 19 board members
- Typical board term: 3 years
- 60% of SAAN member organization have term limits
- 46% are elected by the membership
- 43% are self-perpetuating boards
- 73% require board members to raise money
- Few require specific minimum contributions
- Minimums range from \$144 to \$1000

Page 12/13 of Report



Board members: recruitment

	Count
Arts Organizations	40
Arts service orgs	34
Local arts agencies	34
Corporate/Business	32
Individual artists	30
Educators	30
Nonprofit sector	21
Cultural organizations	19
Foundations	16
Government	12
Other	7



Board members: diversity criteria

	Count
Experience/knowledge/skills	42
Geography	42
Race/ethnicity	40
Gender	34
Arts discipline	33
Nonprofit vs. for-profit	25
Other	11

Page 13
of Report



Board members: raising money

	Count
Recruiting new members	26
Annual personal contribution	23
Becoming an individual member	23
Participating in annual fundraising events	21
Becoming an organizational member	20
Annual corporate contribution	13
Other	9

Page 13
of Report



Committees

	Count
Nominating	37
Executive	34
Membership	30
Advocacy/policy	29
Finance	23
Fundraising/development	23
Education/Arts education	17
Communications	13
Program-related	12
Strategic planning	11
Audit	6

Page 14
of Report

Staff



Page 14 of Report

Finances

- Annual expenditures range from \$400 to \$1,298,890
- Among the 6 largest all are at least 15 years old
- Among the 6 largest 4 are 501(c)(3)
- Among the 6 largest only the Illinois Alliance is a c3/c4
- Minnesota Citizens for the Arts is the only 501(c)(4) reporting annual expenditures in excess of \$21,000.
- Pages 15 and 16 of the report list the total expenditures for each organization that responded to this question



Finances

- All of the organizations that function as combination c3/c4 handle accounts separately
- 27% of 501(c)(3) groups have taken the IRS (h) election.*

*IRS (h) election: The IRS encourages groups to elect to come under the 1976 law governing charity lobbying by taking the (h) election. Groups may do so by filing the one page IRS Form 5768.



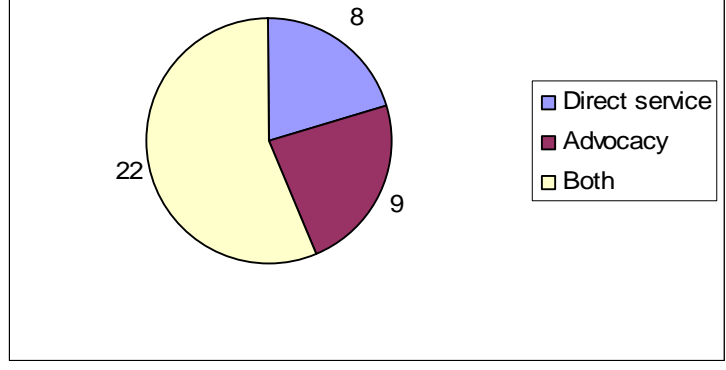
Membership

- All but 2 of 42 respondents collect membership dues
- Dues structure varies widely among SAAN organizations



Membership

Membership dues support



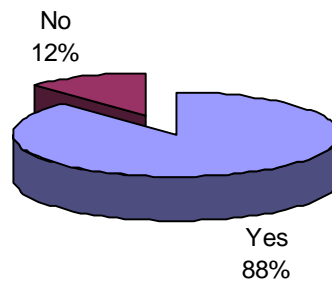
Membership

Org type	Count	%
Businesses/Corporations	21	26.2%
Schools & universities	20	25.0%
Public agencies	11	13.1%
Foundations	10	13.1%
Development organizations	1	2.4%
Other	7	7.1%
None	6	7.1%

Page 17
of Report

Advocacy

Does your organization conduct advocacy activities?



Advocacy: agenda

- 73% have a formal advocacy or public policy agenda
- The agenda is usually developed by a committee of the board and then approved by the full board



Advocacy: arenas

- Most groups advocate within Federal and State government
- 100% of those conducting advocacy activities are working in support of state arts agency funding
- 56% occasionally advocate for funding for other state agencies
- Only a few advocate in regional, county or municipal arenas



Advocacy

- 38% (14 groups) participate in voter registration
- 72% conduct candidate surveys
- 41% (16 groups) work with a Legislative Arts Caucus or Committee
- 58% (22 groups) retain a professional lobbyist



Advocacy: lobbyists

	Count	%
Full-time paid staff	1	4.50%
Part-time paid staff	0	0.00%
Full-time contracted consultant	4	18.20%
Part-time contracted consultant	15	68.20%
Volunteer	2	9.10%

Page 19
of Report



Programs & services: grants

- Only the Michigan Association of Community Arts Agencies and the Vermont Art Council regularly give grants to organizations
- The Wisconsin Arts made one small grant to an individual artist in 2004
- Pennsylvania Citizens writes the grant checks for its state agency



Programs & services: publications

- SAAN members regularly publish annual reports, candidates surveys, and economic impact of the arts reports
- Members have recently published salary surveys, arts ed information, help-kits for artists and a leadership succession toolkit



Programs & services: publications

- Members use the Web and email for updatable resources (calendars, directories, alerts, job announcements, newsletters)
- 39% say their organization is a member of Capwiz or a similar e-advocacy network.



Services to organizations

Advocacy training	29
Seminars/workshops	28
Advocacy campaign coordination	25
Legislative reception	24
Arts Advocacy Day in the state	23
Arts Advocacy Day in DC	21
Conference	20
Peer Advisory Network	19
Awards	15

continued

Page 21
of Report



Services to organizations

Marketing services	12
Other technical assistance	12
Fiscal receiver services	7
Other	7
Volunteer recruitment	5
Block booking	2
Centralized accounting	2
Central purchasing/ equipment loan	1
Group insurance	1
Loan program	1

Page 21
of Report



Services to artists

44% of those responding offer at least one of the following services to individual artists

Seminars/workshops	14
Other	9
Employment/referrals	7
Registry	5
Awards	5
Loan program	1

Page 21
of Report



Collaboration

- All but 1 of those surveyed say they have collaborated at least once in the last 3 years with another organization, agency or business.
- In addition to those listed on page 22, SAAN members have partnered with hunters and anglers, parks advocates, state departments of natural resources, historic preservation agencies and advocates, and state transportation agencies.



Arts Education Alliances

- 32 of 34 responding to the question, “Does your state currently have an Arts Education Alliance?” say their state has an education alliance
- 15 say their organization has partnered with the education group (For example, sharing office space or Arts Education Day at the capital.)
- Several respondents serve on the board or chair the advocacy committee for their AEA

Page 22-23
of Report



Arts Education Alliances

- One respondent mentioned a possible merger
- Several indicated that although their group is on good terms with the Education Alliance, lack of resources limits meaningful collaboration

Page 22-23
of Report



THE INTERVIEWS: ISSUES, INSPIRATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Report sections

1. Characteristics of strong statewides
2. Requirements of leadership
3. Lessons learned from organizations that failed
4. Relationships with state arts agencies
5. Professional lobbyists
6. Advocacy priorities
7. States with separate advocacy and service organizations
8. Expanding from advocacy to service
9. Lack of resources & low visibility
10. Feedback on current AFTA services
11. Member recommendations for AFTA & SAAN



1. Characteristics of effective statewides

- Broad and diverse constituency
- Open lines of communication
- Strong leadership
- Good relationship with the state agency
- Financially stable
- Knowledgeable and experienced board and staff

Starts Page 27
of Report



1. Characteristics of effective statewides

- Up-to-date on trends and issues
- Advocacy efforts get results
- Works with “champions” in the legislature
- Knows how to mobilize the grassroots
- Promotes the arts all year long
- Builds partnerships and coalitions
- Flexible enough to address many needs



2. Effective statewide leaders

- Passionate about the job
- Committed to diversity and inclusion
- Skilled managers
- Good communicators
- Coalition-builders
- Trustworthy
- Courageous
- Political animals
- Motivator

Starts Page 31
of Report



3. Lessons from organizations that failed

- Lack of clear purpose
- Tendency to rush to action without adequate preparation
- Poor governance
- Stagnate board with little or no turnover
- Poor financial planning
- Bad hiring decisions
- Does not represent the entire arts community
- Too “Metro-centric” neglecting other areas of the state
- Bad relationship or poor communication with the state arts agency

Starts Page 35
of Report



4. Relationships with State Arts Agencies

- Communication
- Communication
- Communication
- Recognizing the state agency and its director for their work
- Work with the agency to develop cultural policy
- Involve appointed council members in advocacy efforts
- Diversify funding sources and make sure that state agency funding is never used to support lobbying efforts
- Work together to maximize resources and eliminate duplication of services

Starts Page 39
of Report



5. Professional Lobbyists Worth their Weight in Results

- Benefits of a paid lobbyist
 - Relationship with lawmakers
 - Able to be at the state capital 24/7
 - Frees executive director to manage the organization and mobilize the grassroots
 - Understands political subtleties
 - Helps identify and negotiate invisible barriers

Starts Page 48
of Report



6. Additional Advocacy Priorities

In addition activities in support of the state arts agency budget, SAAN member organizations are speaking out about:

- Arts education
- Quality of life in rural communities
- Local and municipal arts policy
- Term limits
- Alternative public funding models
 - (hotel/motel taxes, license plates...)

Starts Page 51
of Report



7. Separate advocacy & service groups

- Leaders in states with more than one organization recognize the importance of communicating and cooperating with their sister statewide.
 - Assembly directors check in with the advocacy group before sending out alerts or mobilizing membership
 - Advocacy leaders check in with colleagues before expanding services or technical assistance
 - Share links to legislators and other policymakers
 - Consider a merger if it will optimize scarce resources

Starts Page 54
of Report



8. Expanding the Mission from Advocacy to Service

- Reasons for an advocacy group to offer services
 - Strengthens connection with community arts groups
 - Bring new organizations into the advocacy network
 - Increase the capacity of member organizations
 - Make available services that no other organization is providing

Starts Page 57
of Report



9. Barriers to success

- Insufficient financial resources
 - Statewide advocacy and service groups of all sizes are understaffed and under funded
 - Lack of financial resources makes it difficult to reach out, engage constituents and build new alliances
- Lack of visibility
 - SAAN members struggle to help policymakers and the general public realize the value and importance of the arts
 - The case would be stronger if SAAN members had more money to promote their mission and accomplishments

Starts Page 59
of Report



10. Americans for the Arts services

- Interviewees value the legislative information and research that helps them make the case for increased support of the arts
- They trust that Americans for the Arts' data is reliable
- For less established groups, the connection to Americans for the Arts enhances their reputation among constituents and policy-makers

Starts Page 61
of Report



10. Americans for the Arts services

- SAAN members say visits to their state by Americans for the Arts staff lend credibility to their efforts
- One person expressed hope that the presence of an Americans for the Arts representative at an upcoming meeting could encourage civility and solidarity among warring factions

Starts Page 61
of Report



10. Americans for the Arts services

- Statewide leaders are applauding the State Captain program.
 - They value the information Americans for the Arts provides the Captains via e-mail, and appreciate the monthly conference calls.
- Those that have Capwiz are enthusiastic about this new partnership with Americans for the Arts, and appreciate the financial subsidy

Starts Page 61
of Report



11. Recommendations from the field

SAAN Wish List

- Adaptable templates for programs & materials
- Peer mentoring
- Professional development & networking
- Fundraising assistance
- Help for boards when hiring a new Executive Director
- Scholarships to attend national gatherings
- Advanced training
- Grants for joint projects
- Alternative public funding models

Starts Page 64
of Report



Recommendations: best practices

- Create templates of the best resources
 - with permission to adapt those materials to fit the needs of the different states.
- Make resources accessible from anywhere in the country
 - those that need it most are least likely to be able to attend national conferences
 - Make resources & info available at little or no cost to SAAN members



Recommendations: best practices

- SAAN members want to know how their peers raise money to support administration, programs and *lobbying*
- The least experienced leaders need specific assistance with where to look for grant dollars
- SAAN should collect and distribute information about alternative public funding models



Recommendations: mentoring & technical assistance

- Develop a mentoring program to enable veteran statewide leaders to travel and share knowledge
 - Interviewees recommend support over an extended period of time
 - As veterans retire a SAAN mentoring program would help keep their wisdom within the field
- Find ways to help new executive directors
 - Help board members develop the job description and choose a suitable candidate.



Recommendations: workshops & retreats

- What people valued most about NCAN & SAALA were the conferences and retreats
- Make time for participants to delve into the details of programs and advocacy initiatives
- Members require scholarship funds to attend Americans for the Arts/SAAN conferences and workshops



Recommendations: advanced professional development

- Veteran SAAN members need opportunities for high-level training
- Statewide leaders are hungry for dialogue about big-picture issues
- They are eager to work together to set policy goals
- SAAN should develop opportunities for meaningful conversations with funders



Recommendations: joint projects

- SAAN should explore the possibility of raising funds to sponsor projects that advance the goals of the Network.
 - grants could help incubate new statewide groups or provide support for projects such as mailing-list enhancement or website development
 - member organizations should be required to contribute matching funds



Recommendations: joint projects

- Member organizations would benefit from coming together to evaluate and refresh existing Peer Advisory Networks
 - SAAN should consider offering annual joint training for peer consultants



Recommendations: empowering the Network

- Take the time to articulate SAAN goals and work toward achieving a shared agenda
- Continue the conversation about the interrelation of service and advocacy
- SAAN offers an opportunity to evaluate service delivery methods and organizational structures perpetuated by NCAN and SAALA
 - SAAN should save the best and discard the rest
- Arts leaders in states that do not yet have a statewide nonprofit are encouraged by the development of this new Network
 - It's clear where to look for support



Key Perceptions & Recommendations



Key perceptions & recommendations

- Members are perhaps most interested in an easily accessible database of the most effective materials and programs, adaptable for use in any state.
- Leaders of the smallest statewides need nuts-and-bolts information about organizational management, services and advocacy, including best-practices and success stories from more established groups.
- Representatives of the smaller groups need fundraising assistance, with specific advice about where to look for grants to support advocacy activities and statewide initiatives



Key perceptions & recommendations

- SAAN members are eager to continue the networking and professional development retreats and workshops that have long been a staple of both SAALA and NCAN
- Scholarships must be available to encourage representation at national gatherings.
- SAAN should consider hosting a meeting to discuss rural issues – *in a rural state*.



Key perceptions & recommendations

- Even with scholarships, it is unlikely that representatives of many volunteer-run organizations will be able to attend national gatherings. SAAN should work with representatives of these groups to make sure that they are regularly engaged and receiving the most vital materials and services.
- SAAN must also develop ways to serve its most experienced members.



Key perceptions & recommendations

- Several of the state arts agency directors I spoke with are working to build coalitions in support of the “Creative Industries.” SAAN should engage state agency directors in conversation around this topic.
- SAAN should regularly convene its members for strategic thinking, discussion and planning about how to increase the visibility and impact of the arts.
- SAAN should leverage the combined power of its members and national partners to raise funds to support its goals and assist member organizations.



The State of the Field: A Look at Statewide Arts Advocacy and Service Organizations

Jay H. Dick
Director, State Arts Policy
Americans for the Arts
1000 Vermont Ave., NW
6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
202-371-2830
jay@artsusa.org