

2024 Report to Members from NASAA Chair Donna Collins

October 26, 2024

Welcome back, everyone! Let's quickly dive in because we've got just a bit of important business, and then we'll reward ourselves with the closing reception—and of course, enjoying more of San Juan!

The business meeting materials were provided to everyone by email, they are also online—and there are a few hard copies of the materials in the back if you need them.

First on the agenda is my report as chair of the NASAA board.

NASAA, as you all know, is a member-driven organization. That means we, as an elected board, take our role of listening very seriously. Whether you've been in your role five days or 15 years, your stories and feedback drive what NASAA does. From surveys and focus groups to committee work and board meetings, your input shapes our future, and we're grateful for your engagement.

Now, I won't sugarcoat it. As we've listened to your feedback over the past year, we've heard some tough stories: catastrophic budget cuts, burnout, legislative pressures and [new policy constraints] in some states. It's been hard, and we recognize that many of you are facing situations that make this work even more difficult.

In November, more than 5,700 state legislative seats will be contested across the country, spanning the political spectrum. Our portfolio of work should always include building relationships with incoming policymakers from both sides of the aisle. We're the frontline arts leaders, all of us, who can help newly elected or reelected policymakers understand why they should support the arts, helping them know why they should invest public dollars through your agency. And I hope you know that if you need support (messaging, data), NASAA is here for you!

One of the best things about being a member of the NASAA family: you have people! You are never alone if you are facing challenges or exploring new opportunities—NASAA

has your back, and that's something to celebrate. Whether it's helping a new director navigate a public art controversy, providing guidance after a natural disaster or offering research to bolster a funding request, NASAA is always here to support you.

What also makes this community powerful is our shared commitment to public service and our belief that no matter the challenge, we're stronger together. This Assembly has been a great reminder of that—whether we're exchanging ideas, sharing hugs or even busting out some impressive dance moves! NASAA connects us with the joy in our work, stretches our thinking and helps us grow by appreciating the diversity of experiences we bring to the table.

I also want to express my deep appreciation for the NASAA staff, who work tirelessly all year to support the entire network. Their expertise, dedication and hard work, especially in organizing this incredible Assembly, deserve our gratitude. They make all of this possible.

So, as we wrap up this Assembly, let's head home fortified and ready for whatever comes next—knowing NASAA is right here with us, every step of the way. On behalf of the NASAA board, thank you to all of the states and jurisdictions for the critical work you do back home. It is our board's privilege to serve and empower your work.