

ARTS EDUCATION PDI



NASAA ASSEMBLY 2024

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
OCTOBER 23-26

State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers 2024 Professional Development Institute

October 21-23, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Speakers and Artists (in alphabetical order)



Candy Alexandra González

**Trainer, Bartol Foundation; Art Educator + Visual Artist;
Art + Art Education Doctoral Student, Teachers College,
Columbia University**

Candy Alexandra González is a Little Havana and Philadelphia based multidisciplinary visual artist, poet and trauma-competent art educator. Candy received their MFA in book arts + printmaking from the University of the Arts in 2017. Since graduating, they have been a 40th Street artist in residence in West Philadelphia, a West Bay View Fellow at Dieu Donn  in Brooklyn, New York, the 2021 Linda Lee Alter Fellow for the DaVinci Art Alliance and the 2024-2025 Leeway x Fleisher Artist in Residence. Their visual art and poetry practice is rooted in the liberation of fat, brown, immigrant, queer and trans people. Candy is currently an art + art education doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University.



Miriam Bobadilla Rodriguez

Executive Director, Mauro Inc.

Miriam Bobadilla Rodriguez is an architect with over 45 years of experience, holding a master's degree in architecture and a minor in arts. She has led projects that blend creativity, functionality and community impact, particularly in residential and commercial spaces. As president of MB Joma Inc., Miriam developed and sold innovative, affordable housing, revitalizing areas like Santurce, Loiza Street Sector. Her leadership extends to community initiatives, serving as executive director for Mauro Inc. and administrator of Terrarte Inc., where she promotes the arts among underserved communities. Skilled

in project management, budgeting and creative problem solving, Miriam has a proven track record of leading organizations and architectural projects with vision and dedication.



José M. Camuy Maymí

Director of Support for The Arts Office, Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

Puerto Rican baritone, presenter and arts administrator José M. Camuy Maymí has a bachelor's degree in audiovisual communication with radio specialization from the University of Puerto Rico - Río Piedras Campus. He obtained a second bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music and has master's conducive studies in administration and cultural management. As a soloist and member of the main choirs on the island, José has performed at choral festivals and competitions in Argentina, Canada, Germany, France, Italy and Hungary. Standing out among his scenic-musical works is his participation in recitals, operetta, zarzuela, opera premieres and musical theater productions in Puerto Rico and the United States. Recognized as a multifaceted artist and performer, José has collaborated on operatic projects by composers Alberto Guidobaldi, Johanny Navarro and Guarionex Morales-Matos, among others. He's a member of the board of directors of local nonprofit *Teatro de la Ópera*, The Metropolitan Opera Auditions - Puerto Rican District, and served as executive director of *Pro Arte Musical*, the longest-running concert society in Puerto Rico. José is the current director of support for The Arts Office at the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture.



Troy Hickman

Arts Education Programs Manager, Vermont Arts Council

Troy Hickman is the arts education programs manager at the Vermont Arts Council. Leveraging collaborations with artists, teachers and statewide partners, he advocates for learning in, about and through the arts. Since 2017, he has administered the Arts Council's education related grant programs, which include the Artist in Schools, Early Childhood Arts Partnership, and Creative Aging programs. He also coordinates a roster of teaching artists and a soft professional development program for teaching artists called the Idea Exchange. As a creative, Troy has published poetry, exhibited photography and nonfunctional ceramic forms, and experiments with pen and watercolor.



Adelisa González-Lugo, MBA

Founding Executive Director & Lead Educator, Fundación Cortés

Adelisa González-Lugo is the founding executive director and lead educator of Fundación Cortés, a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission of educating and inspiring with their passion for the arts of the Caribbean. Programs consist of hands-on, customized educational workshops with integration of

Caribbean artworks and artists, dialogue, reflection and creative expression.

Furthermore, the program has a wellness and mental health curriculum that was born in 2017 during the Educa Cortés Post María Temporary School that operated for five weeks after the devastation of Hurricane María. With nearly 35 years of professional experience both in Massachusetts and Puerto Rico, Ms. González completed the Adaptive Leadership Certificate Program from Harvard Kennedy School of Government, holds an MBA with a concentration in public and nonprofit management from Boston University Graduate School of Management, and has vast experience designing and facilitation leadership, motivational and team building workshops.



Jodi Kushins

Arts Learning Coordinator, Ohio Arts Council

Jodi Kushins manages TeachArtsOhio, a grant supporting teaching artist residencies in schools for the Ohio Arts Council. In addition, she supports the Ohio Teaching Artist Roster (a collaboration with the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, Art Possible Ohio and Ohio Dance), the Ohio Arts Education Data Dashboard, and creative aging initiatives. A native New Yorker,

Jodi conducted research on museum education in institutions around the five boroughs before transitioning to a high school visual art classroom in Connecticut. She moved to Ohio for doctoral studies at The Ohio State University and went on to co-create an online master's degree program in art education for the University of Florida. When not working, Jodi can be found working on her urban farm and cooking with the harvest, walking her dog, or playing cards with her family.



Christine Leahy

Program Director, Arts in Education, New York State Council on the Arts

Christine Leahy is a program director at the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), in charge of the Arts Education and Literature programs. Partnership initiatives started under her tenure include the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Orchestras and

Classical Music (DinO) collaboration with the music program, the New York State Creative Aging Leaders Network, the NYS Youth Media Symposium, the New York State Teaching Artist Mentorship Program and the Forward Fund for small publishers. In

previous positions at NYSCA she served in the agency's Facilities, Visual Arts, Museum, Architecture + Design and Folk Arts programs. Christine formerly worked for the artist Jenny Holzer and in the education department at the Williams College Museum of Art, and has written for *The New York Times* and National Public Radio.



Alejandra M. Olivieri Robles
Educator, Museo de las Américas

As an artist, Alejandra Olivieri Robles has been part of several art collectives with her works. In 2020, her work was featured in *Forbes* article, "How Artists in Puerto Rico Are Celebrating Justice, Women and Pushing Culture Forward." She began her career at Museo de las Américas as a volunteer and later as a tour guide and workshop assistant, and worked as a volunteer at Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico as an educator for winter camp.

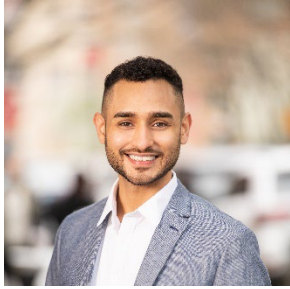
Her work with the public and the students grew an interest to learn the history of Puerto Rico. This new way of seeing the museum collection and the importance of educating about history lead her to obtain a Tourism License at Puerto Rico's Tourism Company. Currently, she works as an independent tour guide, specializing in historic cities such as Old San Juan and Ponce. Since 2022, she has worked as an assistant for the Education and Community Outreach Program at Museo de las Américas coordinating workshops, developing creative activities, and putting her artistic knowledge into practice for the benefit of community projects and its participants.



Leea Reese Russell
Director of Arts Education & Accessibility, Louisiana Division of the Arts

Leea Reese Russell is the director of arts education and accessibility at the Louisiana Division of the Arts, where she advocates for statewide arts education and supports accessibility initiatives. Previously, she served as chief programs officer at the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, overseeing

program development, funding distribution and management of arts programs across several artistic disciplines. Leea has over a decade of experience in arts education, including teaching dance in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System and local dance organizations. She holds a bachelor of science degree in theatre with a concentration in dance performance from Northwestern State University and is pursuing a certificate in arts management from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. A recognized leader in her field, Leea serves on advisory committees, including the Foundation for Louisiana's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation initiative, and has been a grant panelist for the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2022, she was honored as a "Woman of Influence" by the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce.



Francisco J. Rivera Rodríguez
Community and Administrative Liaison, Performing Arts
Program,
Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

Francisco J. Rivera Rodríguez is the community and administrative liaison of the performing arts program at the Puerto Rican Institute of Culture and a theater director based on Puerto Rico and New York City. Recent directing credits include *The Hook up*, by Leonardo José Sanchez (Fuerza Fest 2024), *Dates*, by Christopher Cueves (Pregones/PRTT Step Up residency, 2023), *The Mourners*, by Rivka Rivera (CSP NEW WORK FEST, 2023; CoLabo, Carnegie Mellon, 2023; The Space at Irondale 2022), *The Clone / December / Family* (NYU/AOP, 2022), and *Blood on these hands*, by Luis Herrera (The Tank, 2022). Recent associate director credits include *Passage*, by Christopher Chen (The New School, CoPa, 2023). Recent assistant director credits: *The Vicksburg Project* (Mabou Mines 2023). Recent stage manager/assistant director credits: *La Golondrina* (True Color Fest 2024, Repertorio Español, 2023), *Fuente Ovejuna* (Teatro Círculo 2022-2023), *La vida es sueño* (Teatro Círculo; Alcalá & Almagro, España 2021-2022), and *Mercado Libre* (Boundless Theater Company, 2022). Francisco earned an MFA in directing at The New School, College of Performing Arts, New York City, and a BA in general drama at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus.



Danica (Nikki) Rosengren
Arts Education Specialist, Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture
and the Arts

Danica (Nikki) Rosengren (she/her) began her work as the arts education specialist at the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) in 2020. At SFCA, Nikki oversees the Artists in the Schools Program, the ARTS FIRST Partners and the Artistic Teaching Partner Roster; she is also constantly creating and supporting new initiatives in the arts education field. She works closely with Capitol Modern: Hawai'i State Art Museum (a museum run by SFCA) to develop programming and immersive exhibits geared toward young people and their adults. Over the past two years, Nikki developed a partnership with Capitol Modern and Honolulu Theatre for Youth to create sensory art installations in the museum that also house theatre performances for neurodivergent young people. These installations and performances then transform into preschool shows that tour statewide. This past year, Nikki has focused as well on arts and healing initiatives post Lāhainā fires, and became a Trauma Informed Arts Administrator through the Bartol Foundation. In addition to her work for the state, she is an arts education consultant, and created a variety of professional development modules on integrating the arts into health curricula, as well as spectacle based education. Nikki grew up on Lenni Lenape land (New Jersey) and then went west to pursue theatre at Northwestern University, followed by an MFA in

theatre for youth at Arizona State University. When not at work, you will probably find her on a trail, surfing, doing menstruation advocacy work or trying a new craft.



Alexis Sarah

Arts in Education Project Manager, Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA)

Alexis Sarah currently serves as an art in education project manager with the Washington State Arts Commission. Her background includes private, nonprofit and public-sector experience that spans from preschool educator to entomology lab technician to theatre operations manager. Over the past 20 years, Alexis has had the honor of shaping and supporting programs that connect young learners with the arts. She holds a bachelor of science and a master of public administration from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.



Nancy Seda de León

Manager of Education Programs, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico

Nancy Seda de León was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Nancy comes from a family that introduced her to the importance of culture and the arts. In 2006, she began working as a museum educator with the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, and in 2012 was promoted to supervisor of the School and Family Program. In 2016 she decided to move to a job closer to home and worked for the Science Center, C3Tec, until 2019. For about a year Nancy had a dream, to go back to her passion, the arts. Nancy was given the opportunity to fulfill another dream, to work for a museum with an international collection and recognized as the best museum of all the southeast, the High Museum of Art, where she worked as coordinator of docents and Interns for four and a half years. In 2024 she was able to move back home to Puerto Rico and to the museum that gave her the first chance, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, where she now has the position of manager of education programs and has the commitment to reorganize and move forward all programs to serve the communities around the island.



Carlos A. Torres

Director, Programa Música 100x35

Carlos Torres began his career as a professional musician participating with orchestras such as the Camerata Filarmónica de Puerto Rico and the Arturo Somohano Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as the Puerto Rico's Concert Band. In 2008, he began his work as a professor of Flute/Concert Band/Big Band at the PRCM Preparatory School. He was named principal flutist of the Guillermo Figueroa Zanabria Chamber Orchestra of Bayamón and the Ponce Municipal Band. In 2014, he joined the administrative team of the PRCM Preparatory

School as academic coordinator and simultaneously joined the faculty of the Music Department of the University of Puerto Rico - Río Piedras Campus as a flute professor and the UPRRP Flute Ensemble Conductor (2014-2020). In January 2021, he began his duties as director of the Música 100x35 Program: Sistema de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Puerto Rico, where to this date he leads a team of over 50 teachers and 20 members of the administrative team, serving low-income communities in Puerto Rico, offering musical educational services as a social rescue and transformation program for children from 4 to 18 years old.



Daisy Ann Vega Negrón
Assistant for Education and Community Outreach Program,
Museo de Las Américas

Daisy Ann Vega Negrón has been part of the Museo de Arte de Ponce and Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico respective teams as a volunteer/intern and workshop facilitator, and the team at Museo de Las Américas, where she worked as an educator-tour guide for three years. Since 2018, she has served as assistant for the Education and Community Outreach Program at Museo de Las Américas, coordinating and conducting workshops, tours, and conferences for community and school projects. Daisy holds a bachelor's degree in painting and graphic arts with a minor in psychology from Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, San Germán Campus, and a master's degree in arts of education-museology specialization at Caribbean University of Puerto Rico. Currently she is completing her doctoral studies at the Center for Advanced Studies of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, for which she is studying, researching, and documenting the microhistory of Museo de Las Américas and its legacy.



María D. "Lolita" Villanúa
Artistic and Executive Director, Andanza

María D. "Lolita" Villanúa is the artistic and executive director of Andanza Puerto Rican Contemporary Dance Company and Dance School. She began her professional career as a dancer with Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico. She continued her dance training in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she studied as an exchange student of University of Puerto Rico and participated as actress and production assistant of the Festival of the Oppressed, directed by Augusto Boal. From 1995 to 1998, she danced with Grupo Corpo in Brazil. Upon her return to Puerto Rico, Lolita founded Andanza in collaboration with María Teresa Robles. She has choreographed over 10 original pieces, which are all part of Andanza's repertory. Lolita has an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Portuguese and Brazilian studies from Brown University and a B.A. in modern languages from the UPR. She is a full professor of Portuguese at UPR, Río Piedras Campus, and the interim director of the Department of Foreign Languages.



Natalia M. Villarón-Quñones

Author/Bilingual Bartol-Foundation Trained Educator

Natalia Villarón-Quñones is a queer and femme Afro-Caribbean, trauma informed intersectional ecowomanist, community organizer, and a multidisciplinary artist based in Puerto Rico. She believes in the transformative and healing power of the community and how important it is to preserve oral and written stories and traditions. As the community organizer for

Queers4ClimateJustice, Natalia has opened new conversations with climate crisis organizers in PR about inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues, organized a Q4CJ Youth Roundtable for Pride month in 2022, coordinated a cohort of 12 queer and trans organizers from PR to attend the Creating Change conference in San Francisco in 2023 and in 2024 in New Orleans, and expanded the reach and relationships of the Instagram account @queers4climatejustice. She is a poet, published in the anthology *Puerto Rico en mi Corazón* in 2019, and is now celebrating her first book: *Desamor y Memorias de una Virgo* (*The Heartbreak and Memories of a Virgo*) as well as a fifth-year Intercultural Leadership Institute Fellow.



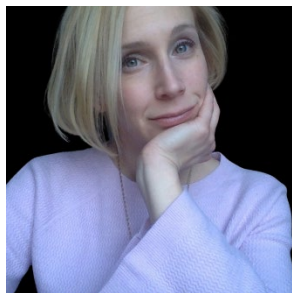
Y No Había Luz

The theatre company Y No Había Luz has carried out artistic and educational work from 2005 to the present, contributing to the growth and development of Puerto Rican culture. Over the course of 18 years, the company has impacted more than 600,000 spectators. The group has an extensive theatrical repertoire of original pieces and educational workshops, with which it has stood

out nationally and internationally. The company has conducted school tours in over 50 municipalities on the Island and offered workshops in artistic residencies in Illinois, Florida, Michigan, New York, Dominican Republic, Chile and Cuba. They currently have an extensive theatrical repertoire, educational books, and an online store offering a collection of original designs of artistic and educational material for the whole family.

2024 Arts Education Working Group

(in alphabetical order)



Samantha Clarke

Mid-Atlantic Representative

Program Officer, Arts Education & Lifelong Learning, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Samantha Clarke is a multifaceted arts administrator, storyteller and educator. She earned a BFA in acting from the University of the Arts and an MA in text and performance from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and the University of London, Birkbeck.

Clarke worked as an actor, teaching artist, theatre director and arts administrator throughout Greater Philadelphia. In addition, she taught and directed at Montgomery County Community College and Penn State University (Berks) for over five years, before moving her career to New Jersey. She worked closely with the NJ State Council on the Arts beginning in 2019, when she managed the Artists in Education Residency Grant Program with program partner Young Audiences Arts for Learning NJ and Eastern PA. In tandem with YA and the state arts council, Samantha developed and launched the Arts Professional Learning Institute (APLI), the state's professional learning program for teaching artists and classroom educators. In 2021, Clarke joined the state arts council as the program officer for arts education and lifelong learning. Through this position, she's been able to develop and manage communities of practice and professional learning for teaching artists and arts education administrators, as well as developing programs that directly serve the state's most isolated and under-resourced populations, including older adults and systems-impacted youth. She is an aspiring writer, a wannabe baker, an avid tea drinker, a chicken finger connoisseur and a loving dog mom.



Donna S. Collins

Executive Director Representative

Executive Director, Ohio Council for the Arts

Board Chair, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Donna S. Collins serves as the executive director of the Ohio Arts Council (OAC). Prior to leading OAC, Collins served as the executive director of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education and as the executive director of the Ohio Citizens for the Arts and Foundation. Collins has more than 30 years of experience in

leading statewide nonprofit organizations, demonstrating consistent success and solid results that impact policy, education, economic development, and arts and culture. A proven leader in the field of arts education and arts advocacy, she currently serves as the board chair of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, cochair of the Ohio Advisory Group of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and Artist Selection Committee chair of the Ohio Women's Suffrage Monument Commission. Previously Collins served as an Americans for the Arts state captain and a State Arts Action Network chair and member, as well as chair of the Arts Education Council. At the

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Collins served multiple terms on the National Governance Committee.



Nancy Daugherty

NEA Liaison

Arts Education Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts

Nancy Daugherty has been an arts education specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since June 2000. Through the agency's arts education program she has worked with applicants in all arts fields and disciplines, and is currently focused in the disciplines of dance, literature, theatre and musical theatre. She also advises the Arts Education Working Group, which designs professional development for state arts agency arts education managers, serves on the Advisory Committee of the Arts Education Partnership, and serves on the intergovernmental team that manages the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards. From 2004 through 2007, Daugherty managed the NEA's Summer Schools in the Arts program, a national initiative designed to assess student learning and offer potential models of rigorous, standards based arts education. Prior to her federal service, she was the arts education coordinator for the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, where she also served as the coordinator for the Governor's Task Force on Arts in Basic Education. For the Center for Economic Options, Daugherty developed training and marketing opportunities for sector-specific microenterprise networks, such as the Appalachian Flower Network. She has served as a facilitator, presenter, consultant, panelist and conference planner for many state and national arts organizations. Daugherty is a graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in sociology and anthropology.



Michelle Hoffmann

Arts Education Director, National Endowment for the Arts

Michelle Hoffmann was appointed director of Arts Education at the National Endowment of the Arts in August 2023. Prior to joining the NEA, she was the director of Education & Community Engagement for Washington Performing Arts, a Washington, D.C., performing arts organization, where she provided strategic leadership and vision for arts education partnerships with schools and community based organizations in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Hoffmann also engaged in collective impact work through Any Given Child DC, an initiative of the DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative. As a member of the Community Arts Team and a cochair of the Equity and Justice Committee of Any Given Child DC, she worked alongside representatives from the Mayor's Office, D.C. Public Schools Chancellor's office, educators and principals, cultural institution partners, and corporate and philanthropic leaders to develop a strategic plan to provide equitable access to arts and humanities education to all students of Washington, D.C. Previously,

Hoffmann held positions at institutions including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Opera, Washington National Opera, DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In 2015, she received the Distinguished Arts Educator Award from Yale University School of Music. Hoffmann has a degree in music performance from Duquesne University and is an alumna of the National Arts Strategies 2018 Executive Program in Arts & Culture Strategy through the University of Pennsylvania School of Public Policy and Practice.



Jennie Knoebel

Midwest Region Representative, Chair

Senior Grants and Programs Manager, Iowa Arts Council

Jennie Knoebel is the senior grants and programs manager at the Iowa Arts Council, currently overseeing project and operating support grants and arts learning initiatives. She also leads and organizes statewide, professional development programs, including the Iowa Regional Arts Forums, Iowa Arts and Fine Arts Education Summits, and the Iowa Culture Leadership Cohort program. Knoebel has been with the agency since 2016. Prior to that position, she was the executive director of Austin Area Arts in Austin, Minnesota, and the communications coordinator for the University of Minnesota Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Knoebel has an M.L.S. degree with a focus in arts administration from the University of Minnesota and a B.A. in theatre arts and communication studies from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

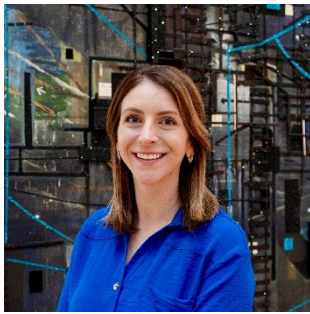


Tamar Krames (She/Her)

Western Region Representative

Arts in Education Program Manager, Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA)

Tamar Krames joined ArtsWA in 2019 as an artist, educator and facilitator. She has taught high school as a certified teacher and supported preservice teachers and educators across Washington state as an instructional coach focused on language, literacy and culture. She now oversees projects that expand arts and cultural learning opportunities for students, teaching artists and classroom teachers working in any artistic discipline. Current projects include managing arts in education grants, supporting collective work for equitable access to arts education, codirecting the Washington State Teaching Artist Training Lab, and amplifying the creative practices of youth and educators. Tamar holds a master in teaching degree from The Evergreen State College and a bachelor of fine arts degree from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is still in touch with her high school art teacher through mailed postcards and drawings.



Meghan McFerrin

NASAA Liaison

Arts Education Project Manager, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Meghan McFerrin coordinates NASAA's professional development services for state and jurisdictional arts agency arts education staff. Meghan is an arts educator with experience teaching in K-12 classrooms and in education, museum and community arts settings. From 2017 – 2022, Meghan worked for the Georgia Department of Education. In this role, she supervised the state's STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) certification program, helping schools to integrate the arts into their instructional strategies and to develop community arts partnerships. Meghan has also worked for the High Museum of Art as a coordinator of school services and, more recently, as a teaching artist. She is an adjunct professor of art education at Capital University. Meghan's personal passion for the arts is evident in her work as a visual artist and a potter.



Kimberly Washburn Motte

Southern Region Representative, Cochair

Arts Education Director, South Carolina Arts Commission

Kimberly Washburn Motte is the arts learning director at the South Carolina Arts Commission. As a certified visual arts teacher and former museum educator, her passion for education in and through the arts drives her work for statewide equitable access to arts learning opportunities across the age spectrum. Motte is the 2021 South Carolina Art Education Association Museum Educator of the Year.



Martha Piscuskas

New England Region Representative

Program Director, Maine Arts Commission

Martha Piscuskas is a visual artist with over 30 years of nonprofit organizational leadership alongside a deep understanding of Maine's communities and culture. Before joining the Maine Arts Commission in 2019, she was executive director at Waterfall Arts, a community arts center in coastal Belfast that she cofounded in 2000. There she curated and organized all arts learning opportunities, exhibitions and events. One of five artist siblings with parents in secondary education, Piscuskas grew up immersed in active creative inquiry. In addition to serving on her local school board, she has led and founded numerous organizations, including community funds MaineShare and Maine Initiatives, and the Maine Center on Economic Policy. Piscuskas has presented nationally and served on multiple regional, state and local boards. She was the executive director of several statewide organizations focusing on community resilience and empowerment.

She holds a B.A. in cultural anthropology from Wesleyan University and a B.F.A. from the Maine College of Art & Design. Piscuskas lives on a homesteading solar-run farm with her family and gets out hiking and lake paddling whenever possible.



Laura Roghaar

Western Region Representative (through August 2024)

Arts Learning Services Director, Idaho Commission on the Arts

Laura Roghaar recently left her role as arts learning services director for the Idaho Commission on the Arts and has begun a new chapter with Idaho Coalition for Community Schools through the United Way. Laura played an integral role in planning the 2024 PDI and will be greatly missed in the arts education peer group community. Her portfolio includes grants and services supporting K-12 arts education and creative aging. Roghaar is also a poet and teaching artist who has taught creative writing workshops in community settings including schools, juvenile detention facilities, shelters and libraries. Previously, she served as the Idaho statewide coordinator for Poetry Out Loud and program director for The Cabin literary center.



Isabel Rosa Irizarry

Site Host

Consultant,

Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

Isabel M. Rosa Irizarry, GPC, CNP, forms part of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (ICP) as a consultant since 2017. She collaborates with the implementation of the strategic plan and strategy development, as a grants professional, liaison with grantors and foundations, and is the Sponsored Programs advisor. She works closely with the executive director, deputy director, and program directors. Highlights at ICP include timely completion using external funds, and leading ICP to apply for competitive funding from different potential grantors, diversifying the sources of funds to carry out the diverse array of initiatives at the organization. Isabel has been actively involved in hurricane recovery initiatives. After the impact of the storms in 2017, upon learning about the challenges arts sector nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt status face in Puerto Rico, she presented a proposal to the National Endowment for the Arts requesting capacity building activities to increase their sustainability. The awarded pilot project provides courses to help organizations obtain their 501(c)(3) and learn about grant writing and grants management. Isabel also helped coordinate the agreement between ICP and the regional arts organization Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation in 2022.



Jenni Ryan

Mid-America Region Representative

Arts Education Program Specialist, Missouri Arts Council

Jenni Ryan joined the Missouri Arts Council (MAC) in September 2022 as the arts education program specialist. Before coming to MAC, she worked in both the education and theatre sectors, as an actor and an English and theatre teacher. Jenni spent many years teaching grammar, writing and literature; directing plays and musicals; and fostering a love of learning in (mostly) teenagers. As an actor and theatre person, she has been able to make a lot of art and share a wide range of stories with audiences. Now at MAC, Jenni continues to champion the arts and artists of Missouri through the arts education programs MAC supports. She is the new state coordinator of Poetry Out Loud, and she is developing a network of A+ Schools (a whole-school arts integration model) for the state. Jenni is committed to her belief that the arts are part of any core curriculum, essential for growing big brains, strong bodies, and full hearts.