



North Dakota Council on the Arts, Agency 709

Senate Appropriations Education and Environment Division

March 6, 2023

Arts and creativity make us stronger—as individuals, families, communities, states and as a country. They are a backbone of innovation, prosperity, and thriving people and places. Public funding for arts and creativity is a high- return investment that benefits every American in every city, town and rural community nationwide.

INTRODUCTION:

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Appropriations Education and Environment Division - good afternoon. My name is Kim Konikow, Executive Director of the North Dakota Council on the Arts. I am joined by Fiscal Officer/Grants Administrator Robin Bosch.

I just passed my 5th anniversary working with NDCA; it has been an adventure I never anticipated, particularly with a pandemic included. I am proud to be here today and share our agency's accomplishments, present the agency's 23-25 biennial budget Senate Appropriations request and to answer any questions you may have.

There's a lot of great art happening during the 68th Legislative Session; I encourage you to stop in the Governor's staff offices to see the fine artwork of Bismarck native Todd Clausnitzer. And, up on the 18th floor, a space we curate, is a wonderful exhibit based on over 10 years of ND artists in residence, a great collaboration with Parks & Recreation.

BACKGROUND:

The North Dakota Council on the Arts is citizen-led and professionally staffed through a nine-member appointed Board that provides oversight to a staff of five FTE and one FT temp. We were established by state statute in 1967 *“to ensure that the role of the arts in the life of our communities will continue to grow and will play an evermore significant part in the welfare and educational experience of our citizens.”*



North Dakota’s commitment to arts and culture ensures healthy people, creates vibrant communities, and supports a 21st century state economy. Our purpose is to bring that commitment to life. The mission is *to strengthen the creative capacity of North Dakota for all who live or visit here: honoring our cultural traditions, empowering excellence and innovation, inspiring arts and culture opportunities for all.* As a grant-making agency, our role is to support creators, art providers, and participants.

NDCA uses grants, convening, education, and partnerships to:

Seed new ideas and activity and build resilient capacity for the long-term

Inspiring our mission are these deeply held beliefs and values:

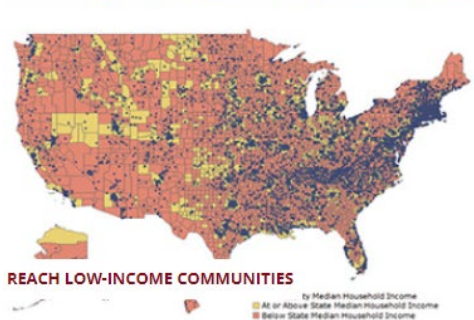
Art tells our stories – individually and as a state

Art and culture, by and for the community, have the power:

- To inspire and enhance lives
- To build community and transform its spaces
- To lift up, heal, and unite across divides

Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society. We hold ourselves accountable to the people of North Dakota and the trust placed in us. Because of this we:

- Pursue excellence and innovation in all things
- Pursue cultural equity throughout the state
- Engage our state through fair and transparent processes



- ❖ The arts foster vibrant communities and create productive places for people to live, work, play and raise their families.
- ❖ The arts put people to work, produce tax revenue, stimulate business and retain a talented work force.
- ❖ The arts ignite young imaginations and boost achievement in academic fundamentals.

Arts and arts education make our country stronger. They make us a country of innovators. No matter what their chosen field—whether it's a trade, whether it's a profession, whether it's service, whether it's manufacturing—young people who engage in the arts will rise to the top because of the creative skills they have developed, nurtured and harnessed.” —Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA)

- ❖ The arts support a strong democracy, engaging us in civic discourse and bridging divides among us.
- ❖ Intrinsic to the arts is the power to connect us, uplift us and help us perceive things in new ways.
- ❖ The arts foster physical, mental and emotional health.
- ❖ The arts preserve our legacies and our roots, passing along our nation's unique character and traditions to future generations.

VALUE AND IMPACT:

NDCA thanks the legislature for the immense and positive impact your many decades of support have had on citizens throughout the state. As you consider our 23-25 biennial budget Senate Appropriations request, please know that you are funding the valuable work the arts do in a variety of arenas.

NDCA's budget is comprised of appropriations for salaries (25%), operations (14%), and grants. On average, nearly two-thirds of that budget (61%) is redirected across North Dakota through our grant programs and partnerships. When you fund NDCA, you are providing financial support for communities and citizens across the state – your constituents!

These in turn support:

- **Major Grant Programs:** Artists (Fellowships, Folk & Traditional Arts Apprenticeships & Professional Development), arts organizations (Institutional Support & Special Projects), K-12 education (Arts in Education Residencies & Collaborations), and North Dakota communities (Community Access Grants);

- Additional Statewide Programs: Art for Life (supporting ongoing health and wellness in care facilities), Poetry Out Loud (the nation’s annual arts education program), Statewide Arts Convening (biennial capacity-building for North Dakota) in conjunction with Main Street, the Governor’s Awards for the Arts (biennial celebration of North Dakota), public exhibitions at the State Capitol, accessibility training for organizations, and community fieldwork to build capacity;
- Numerous partnerships with state and national nonprofits and *many* state agencies, including ND Commerce, ND Tourism, ND DOT, Health & Human Services, Parks & Recreation, Corrections, Game & Fish;
- Strategic Initiatives such as *Arts Across the Prairie: Placemaking in Rural North Dakota*, Native artist professional development training, the Densmore/Lakota Song Repatriation Project, the Tiny Print press project, and incorporating DEI and Accessibility principles across the agency.

In the first 18 months of the current biennium, individuals and organizations in 69 communities received grant funding with impact often reaching beyond community borders. We have distributed \$1,950,539 to date through 330 unique grants across most ND counties. This includes 30 partnership grants that have a regional or statewide reach.

In addition to state appropriations, we are federally funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) through an Annual Partnership Award. Our federal funding has increased over recent years – positively impacting the agency’s ability to serve the citizens of the state. This trend is very likely to continue regardless of leading political parties. The NEA annual allocation for Federal FY23 (State FY24) is expected to increase by \$65,000. Because ND matches these funds dollar for dollar – state money with federal money – NDCA must receive a minimum increase of \$130,000.

To be clear, that funding requires NDCA:

1. be financially supported by its State government;
2. match NEA dollars at least 1:1. The workload has increased, based on agency changes to be more than just a funder. The innovative undertakings that NDCA is currently involved in are statewide in reach – but our staff and operations haven’t grown to accommodate this. We have managed with what we have, wearing multiple hats, but doing administrative work that takes away from work in the field.

Our 23-25 Biennial Appropriations request passed in the House, 75 Yay.

AREN'T THERE MORE CRITICAL ISSUES GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADDRESS?

The arts help our country resolve some of the most serious public policy problems.

- ❖ **Economic growth**: The value of arts and cultural production *in America* is \$763.6 billion (4.2% of our gross domestic product), more than four times greater the amount that the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector contributes to the GDP.

The arts and culture industry contributes \$877 billion to our economy every year—and the Endowments are uniquely positioned to help smaller, rural areas access that energy in a way that private capital can't or won't.—Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME)

- ❖ **Effective education**: Arts education raises academic achievement because it encourages creative thinking, analytical reasoning, effective communication and collaborative work—all competencies important for career and life success.

When creative arts, such as painting, poetry, dance and music are incorporated into a school's curriculum, children actually excel in other disciplines and are more successful in the long term. ... Arts education prepares American workers to compete in the global marketplace and what some are calling the new 'economy of ideas.'— Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)

- ❖ **Effective health care**: The arts facilitate healing and contribute to well-being throughout a person's life. Not only can arts therapy reduce the length of in-patient medical care and reduce dependency on medications, but it also improves patients' satisfaction with health care, helps slow cognitive decline and serves as an effective tool for coping with mental and emotional health concerns.
- ❖ **Supporting our Vets**: There is growing recognition among military leaders, arts therapists and doctors that the arts can be especially effective in helping patients suffering from traumatic brain injury and/or post-traumatic stress.

It's so important to have that expression as we are working with our wounded warriors ... people recovering from stroke, or a child who has a speech challenge, or someone who has just lost someone very special in their life ... it is the arts, through song and music and dance and other forms of expression, that allow us to heal, to recover, to grow, and then to become more resilient.—Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)

WILL CUTTING THE ARTS HELP BALANCE GOVERNMENT BUDGETS?

Quite Simply, NO. The National Endowment for the Arts receives a mere 0.004% of the total federal budget, less than one-half of one-hundredth of one percent. State arts agency appropriations, meanwhile, constitute just 0.041% of state general fund expenditures, less than one-half of one-tenth of one percent. Cutting this funding would not achieve any significant savings—but it would drastically harm communities both urban and rural, wealthy and underserved. Furthermore, the arts return \$27.5 billion in tax revenue to federal, state, county and municipal governments. A strong arts sector makes it easier for our government to balance its books. "...direct grants do not finance the bulk of artistic activity in the U.S.; they fill gaps, enhance arts education, nourish arts creation, assist in the presentation and delivery of artworks, and enable preservation. "

State arts agencies and the NEA operate with modest financial resources, lean staffs and as little red tape as possible. State arts agencies are able to do a lot with a little due to sound management practices and many partners in agency initiatives, strategic planning and funding decisions. Following you will find data that demonstrates how North Dakota compares to other states both in the Midwest and nationally, as well as the relationship of arts funding to economic impact.

WHY THE ARTS MATTER IN NORTH DAKOTA As of 3/27/2020

NATIONAL ARTS FACTS
ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR'S PERCENTAGE OF U.S. ECONOMY (Artists, University Arts, Commercial & Nonprofit Arts Organizations Combined)
ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR REPRESENTS 4.5% OF NATION'S GDP & 5.1 MILLION JOBS
The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that nationally the arts and culture sector is a \$878 billion industry, representing 4.5% of the nation's GDP—a larger share of the economy than construction or education services.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2017.

ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR REPRESENTS 4.5% OF NATION'S GDP & 5.1 MILLION JOBS

\$878 BILLION	Arts & Culture Sector
\$790.4 BILLION	Construction
\$246 BILLION	Education Services

BONUS: U.S. exports generate a \$29.7 billion arts trade SURPLUS.

NUMBER OF ARTS-RELATED BUSINESSES AND JOBS (Commercial & Nonprofit Arts Organizations Combined)
Nationally, 673,656 businesses employ 3.48 million people who are involved in the creation or distribution of the arts. Based on Dun & Bradstreet data, this means that 3.9% of all businesses and 1.9% of all employees are connected to the creative industries.
Source: American Council on the Arts, Creative Industries, 2017.

673,656 BUSINESSES & 3.48M EMPLOYEES ARE INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OR DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARTS

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & THEIR AUDIENCES
Nationally, the nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$166.3 billion in economic activity annually that supports 4.6 million jobs and generates \$25 billion in federal, state, and local government revenue.
• Spending by arts audiences generated \$102.5 billion to local businesses.
Source: American Council on the Arts, Arts & Economic Prosperity 6, 2017.

NONPROFIT ART IS A \$166.3 BILLION DRIVER OF OUR NATIONAL, STATE & LOCAL ECONOMY.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN GRANTS TO NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & ARTISTS
So how much is the federal government investing in the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)? Congress has proposed allocating \$62.25 million in the NEA in FY 2020, which has been relatively level for the last several years. This amount is just 49¢ per capita, yet the nonprofit arts industry generates over \$13 billion in federal tax revenue back to the treasury. Imagine what nonprofit arts groups could generate with the 1¢ per capita!

Source: Americans for the Arts Action Fund, 2020.
Revolving Fund: The Arts Budget for the Nation, The NEA, 2015.

NORTH DAKOTA ARTS FACTS
ND ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR REPRESENTS 2.8% OF STATE'S GDP & 14,035 JOBS
The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector contributes \$1.45 billion to North Dakota's economy representing 2.8% of the state's GDP—a larger share than some other industries in the state.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2017.

ND ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR REPRESENTS 2.8% OF STATE'S GDP & 14,035 JOBS

\$1.45 BILLION	Arts & Culture Sector
\$3.1 BILLION	Construction
\$0.17 BILLION	Education Services

BONUS: In 2017, ND arts and culture compensation grew by 3.5%.

IN NORTH DAKOTA, 1,267 ARTS-RELATED BUSINESSES EMPLOY 6,000 PEOPLE.

- In Bismarck, 212 Arts-Related Businesses employ 1,249 people.
- In Cass County, 360 Arts-Related Businesses employ 2,071 people.
- In Grand Forks, 129 Arts-Related Businesses employ 815 people.

Source: Americans for the Arts, Creative Industries, North Dakota report, 2017.

1,267 BUSINESSES & 6,000 EMPLOYEES ARE INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OR DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARTS

NONPROFIT ART IS A \$10.1 BILLION DRIVER OF JUST ONE OF OUR LOCAL ECONOMIES.

Source: NEA to NASAA, 2020.
Revolving Fund: The Arts Budget for a Strong Economic Future, by Stanek, May 10, 2017.
The local sources of the endowment reported in the following table are in US dollars.

WHY THE ARTS MATTER IN NORTH DAKOTA As of 3/27/2020

"The arts give people hope, joy, and a sense of belonging. They teach discipline, persistence, and grit. They bring beauty to the community and make it a place worth living! We love seeing our young musicians learn from each other and believe all have the right to participate."
—Nancy Weyer Youth Orchestra, Grand Forks

NORTH DAKOTA ARTS FACTS
THE ARTS UNITE US AND ENHANCE THE VITALITY OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE PEACE GARDEN STATE
The Art for Life Program seeks to improve the emotional and physical health and wellness of elders in care facilities, as well as those living independently, through intensive art and artist interaction.

MEET SOME NORTH DAKOTA ARTS ADVOCATES

- **Justin Anderson** is Executive Director of Minot Area Council on the Arts. >More
- **Dagna Dal Val** is the President & CEO of The Arts Partnership which is an arts organization dedicated to the Governor's Awards for the Arts 2017. >More
- **Kim Korokovi** is Executive Director of the North Dakota Council on the Arts. >More
- **Paul Noet** is the Co-Director of the Bismarck Downtown Artist Cooperative, 2017 awardee of the Governor's Awards for the Arts in the category of arts education. >More
- **Jessie Veeder** is a Planning Engineer and is a program director of the Long X Arts Foundation as well as an individual awardee of the Governor's Awards for the Arts in 2019. >More

ART IN NORTH DAKOTA

- The Department of Tourism can introduce you to North Dakota's Arts and Art Scene [here](#).
- NDCA highlights the partnership between the arts and state government in five critical areas. See the video [here](#).
- The Guide to North Dakota Arts and Culture Destinations was compiled by the North Dakota Council on the Arts, providing a comprehensive listing of arts organizations, cultural centers, galleries, and artist studios that you may easily access and add to your vacation plans [here](#).

NORTH DAKOTA ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Dakota Arts & Culture: [artsandculture.org](#)
Frontier Arts Center: [empireartscenter.com](#)
Long X Arts Foundation: [longxarts.com](#)
Midwest Council on the Arts: [midwestarts.org](#)
North Dakota Council on the Arts: [ndcouncilonthearts.org](#)
The Arts Partnership: [theartspartnership.net](#)

THE ARTS ARE EVERYWHERE!

- Start a cultural tour of the state in Fargo where the Plains Art Museum features regional contemporary artwork, American Modernism, and Native American artworks that celebrate the west.
- Head west on Interstate 94 to Jamestown for the National Buffalo Museum and the Arts Center for its summer series that change monthly, including a children's exhibit in the square with a farmer's market.
- Continue west to the Great Plains Auditorium in Bismarck for Broadway shows, concerts, cabaret, and comedy. The Capitol Gallery and the Bismarck Art Gallery & Gallery Association.
- In New Rockford, you can go to the Dakota Plains Regional Center for the Arts for high quality theater.
- Cut west in Watford City to the Long X Arts Foundation with its beautiful Flagship Gallery, which also houses the high school.
- The James Memorial Preservation Society in Williston has art exhibits and classes. The town is also known for its Dakota Prairie Quilt Guild and the Wounded Knee Club.
- "Adding the border between ND and Canada the International Peace Garden offers the International Music Camp Summer School of the Arts that attracts students of all ages for classes in Dance, Creative Writing, Painting, Drawing, Theater, and Music."

View the Top 10 Reasons to Support the Arts. Click Here.

NORTH DAKOTA ARTS NEED YOU!

JOIN THE ARTS ACTION FUND FOR FREE TODAY!

E-MAIL US: ArtsActionFund@usa.gov
VISIT US: ArtsActionFund.org/join
CALL US: 202.371.2830.2067
FOLLOW US: [Arts Action Fund](#) | [ArtsActionFund](#) | [Arts/ndca](#)

Download this fact sheet, 'Why the Arts Matter in North Dakota,' with corresponding resource links, visit www.ArtsActionFund.org/StateFactSheets.

3/27/2020

Our Core

Mission

The North Dakota State Legislature created the North Dakota Council on the Arts "to ensure that the role of the arts in the life of our communities will continue to grow and will play an evermore significant part in the welfare and educational experience of our citizens." Our purpose is to bring that commitment to life.

We strengthen the creative capacity of North Dakota for all who live or visit here:
 honoring our cultural traditions,
 empowering excellence and innovation,
 inspiring arts and culture opportunities for all.

What We Do

As a state arts agency, our role is to support creators, art providers, and participants. We use grants, convening, education, and partnerships to:

- Seed new ideas and activity
- Build resilient capacity for the long-term

To do this well, we must balance our investments:

- With organizations, artists, educators, and communities
- For broad geographic reach with deep engagement
- That sustain ongoing work and build new capacity
- For flexible response to ongoing and emerging needs

Beliefs & Values

Inspiring our mission are these deeply held beliefs:

- Art tells our stories – individually and as a state
- Art, culture and creativity, by and for the community, have the power to:
 - Inspire and enhance lives
 - Build community and transform its spaces
 - Lift up, heal, and unite across divides
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society

We hold ourselves accountable to the people of North Dakota and the trust placed in us. Because of this we:

- Pursue excellence and innovation in all things
- Pursue cultural equity throughout the state
- Engage our state through fair and transparent processes

Vision 2030

A North Dakota in which all can experience arts and culture. All can participate; all are welcome; and arts and culture thrive.

Strategic Direction

Art & Creative Process for All

Goal 1 Working toward a North Dakota in which all can experience arts and culture – diversity of tradition, of genre, of exposure. All can participate. All are welcome.

Vibrant Communities

Goal 2 Regions, cities, communities, and networks across the state appreciate the power of the arts. They use that power to enhance the vitality of North Dakota. They celebrate the vibrant communities that result, each with arts, creativity and culture at their core.

Thriving Arts Ecosystem

Goal 3 NDCA, communities, organizations, artists, and educators thrive in an interdependent, mutually supported, system. Each has resilient capacity aligned for impact.

Excellence & Innovation

Goal 4 NDCA models excellence and innovation for the field. It sustains its gains through self-reflection, evaluation and continuous improvement. Its innovative partnerships open doors to greater influence and impact, increase its efficiency, and leverage its resources.

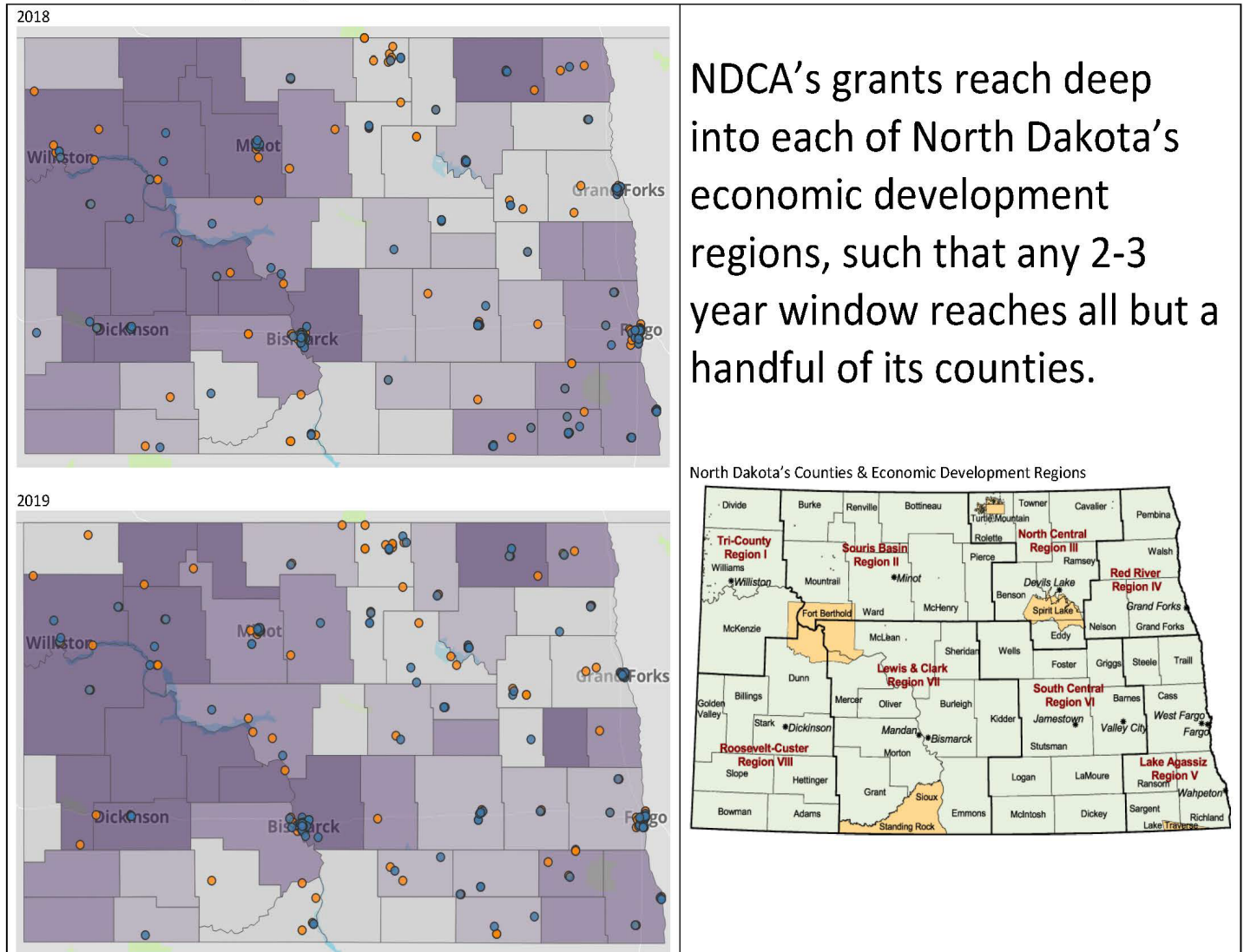
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the last biennium, NDCA began its reinvention from being recognized solely as a funding agency to a community partner and economic driver of the arts across the state.

Internal Capacity Growth

- Shifted internal workflows and systems to better accommodate rhythms of grantees;
- Converted to telework in response to COVID-19 while planning for office accessibility and visibility;
- Creatively stretched staff capacity while providing hands-on education and experiences for students;
- Worked with new FTE Public Information Officer;
- Launched a new, more user-friendly grants management system that facilitates data-gathering and sharing;
- Received Federal ARP funds of \$749,600 and distributed grants to 52 organizations and 63 individuals. This was one-time funding – accepted and spent.

NDCA's Geographic Reach



Breaking Attendance and Building Audiences

- Accessibility Convenings Online in fall 2020 and 2022 - with record attendance and modeled in several other states as well as at a National Endowment for the Arts Conference;
- In 2021, NDCA moved its exhibition program to the 18th Floor Observation Deck at the Capitol with more visitorship viewing ND artists;
- NDCA participated in a nationally telecast program, "Arts Across America", produced by the Kennedy Center highlighting diverse artists and styles;
- Several diverse art exhibitions have traveled to ND sites, increasing visibility.

Awards and Recognition:

- A \$60,000 Leveraging State Investment in Creative Aging grant for the Tiny Print Press Project;
- The Folk Arts and Art for Life Programs were featured in the Smithsonian Institution's *Folklife Magazine*;
- In the last year, NDCA stewarded the Densmore Lakota Song Repatriation project with Dakota Legacy with private funds from The Bush Foundation;
- Arts Across the Prairie: Placemaking in Rural North Dakota, NDCA's newest Statewide program began; a first-of-its-kind, statewide, public art program creating large-scale rural installations that reflect the unique history, landscape, and cultural heritage of the eight regions. This program is in collaboration with the ND-DOT (a first) and North Dakota Tourism/Commerce;
- DEI and Special Partnerships:
 - NDCA made significant progress toward cultural equity, accessibility, inclusion, and reaching communities traditionally underserved by the arts;
 - Tribal partnerships were further developed, including United Tribes Technical College. The Native American Development Center and First People's Fund of South Dakota partnered with NDCA to host "Train the Trainers" in February 2022;
 - Hosted a Curated Cohort (25 participants) in a three-month DEI training online.

CRITICAL ISSUES FY23 AND BIENNIUM 23-25

NDCA's budget request endeavors to address continuing cost concerns related to:

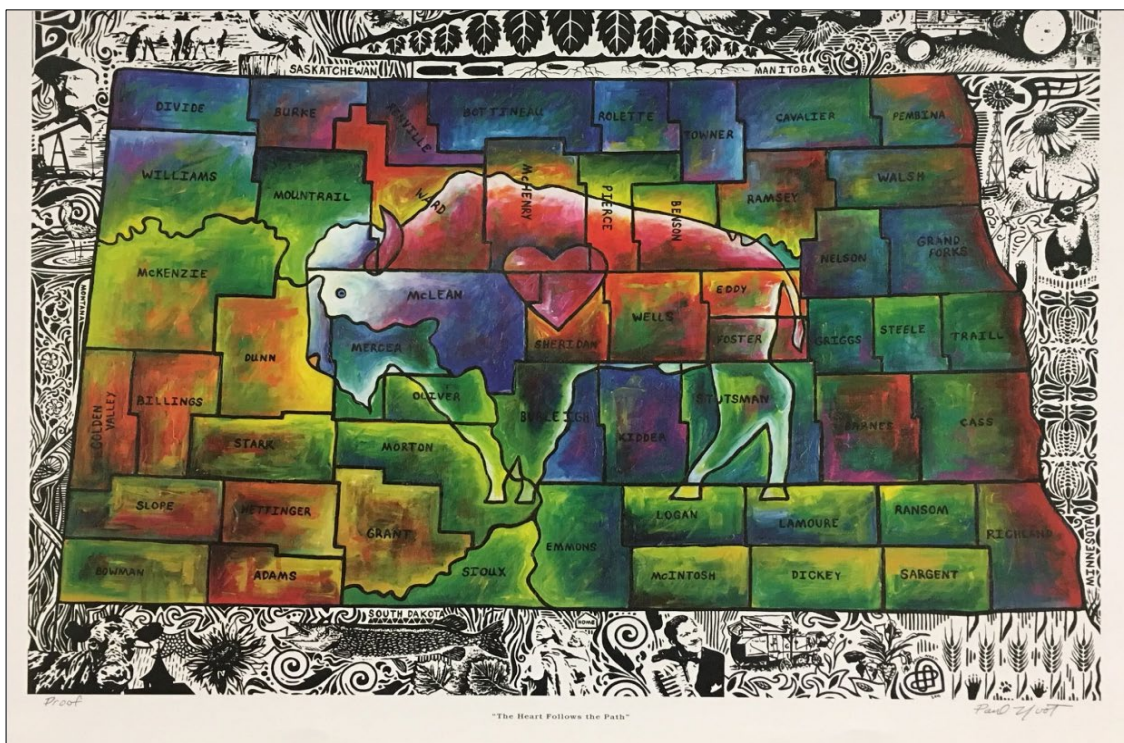
1. State appropriations that have kept up with NEA requirements but without Agency investment for innovation and demand from citizens;
2. An operations line item that was repeatedly cut to 2013 appropriations; levels must increase to accommodate inflation and use of new professional systems.

Three factors affect all NDCA costs in the coming biennium:

1. Increased salaries to support professional level of programs and workload that are currently in place: a FTE Administrative Assistant III; **three** FT Staff will be retiring – compensation package payouts are needed*, and increased wages for new hires and crossover training;
2. Additional Operational Funds to support increases to several processes lines that affect NDCA's professional stature and build back operational funds due to prior cuts as well as inflation. This includes several contractors and consultants as well as new investments in technical and operational systems. A new strategic planning process will begin in 2024;
3. NDCA's Creative Placemaking Initiative, *Arts Across the Prairie*, is a national model and requires additional program funding and visibility to match private contributions. This is also true in both Arts Education and Accessibility programs.

THE FUTURE:

The agency is poised for exceptional returns on investments but has been constrained by minimal state investment in the past. While some have placed a low value or relevance on arts and cultural activity in the past, the pandemic made clear NDCA's place as critical infrastructure for North Dakota communities. It is time that the state takes its rightful place as a leader among others across the Nation and share the wealth of art and culture that exist in North Dakota. For the agency to strategically move forward, to continue to bring critical funding into the state, and to support our communities in the way they deserve, additional funds are a necessity.



PAUL NOOT

NDCA GOALS AS AN AGENCY:

With proper legislative support, NDCA can be the best at what it does – the “go to” organization for arts and culture information; operating with efficiency, and always getting the work done, with an empowered staff; constantly reinventing itself with active, strategic planning; able to produce clear data to show a return on Legislative investment; visionary in its programs that are recognized nationally and replicated; known for quality work; excelling at partnerships that are strong and diverse; in touch with artists and arts organizations via a strong online and in-person presence throughout the state regularly; involved in most school/district in the state in some way; cultivating Arts for Life programs around the

State, connecting to programs that utilize the arts as a means of transformative healing; increasing revenues through public/private partnerships that are not in competition with our constituents; and led by an invested, active Board that acts on behalf of NDCA.

NDCA'S VISION OF NORTH DAKOTA:

If we are supported, then North Dakota can be a place where artists are valued as members of their communities and encouraged in their creative expression; the arts are recognized as an essential educational tool; artistic quality is honored and valued for its role as diverse community members add richness and excitement to the lives of all citizens; a network exists through which citizens from all walks of life are made aware of the availability of arts opportunities and benefits; and the arts are recognized as a valuable partner in building the state's economy and enhancing daily life by other state agencies, businesses, organizations, and the general public.

The presence of a strong state arts agency ensures that all communities—regardless of their geographic location, political affiliation or economic status—are systematically and equitably served. Only state arts agencies are positioned to provide strategic and equitable leadership and support to all areas of a state.

Every state in our nation funds the arts, and we in North Dakota are extremely grateful for the funding that comes from you, our legislators. ***The arts are a nonpartisan issue***; what we do at NDCA improves the impact of other state agencies and services.



Photo by Susie Kaldis Lowe. Street mural involving more than 200 community members

NDCA works to reach the goals that are important to our state: improved economic development, better education for our youth, enhanced wellness for our citizens, and making our communities places where people want to work, raise families, and live. We contribute to the health of small businesses that are crucial to our state. We make our communities vibrant, welcoming and desirable – the strongest element of attracting a workforce. And we enhance the creativity that is crucial to the success of future generations.

Why do we, as a free people, honor the arts? Well, the answer is both simple and profound. The arts and the humanities teach us who we are and what we can be... We honor the arts not because we want monuments to our own civilization but because we are a free people. The arts are among our nation's finest creations and the reflection of freedom's light." — President Ronald Reagan.

We as a government agency can do far more than private groups to assist our state. A government agency must provide fair access to all, with no personal agenda. We are more publicly accountable for how we use our funds, and we work to reduce barriers to public participation in the arts. Arts organizations in turn use public dollars to generate earned income and leverage local funds. Lastly, public funding is more apt to reach the underserved and rural communities, and we at NDCA, do our best to reach *all* citizens.

Based on the Governor's FY23-25 Biennial recommendations, and passage by the full House, [we would like your consideration of four additional investments](#) -- that will make an immense difference. With your help, our small, but mighty hard-working agency can accomplish so much more for the citizens of North Dakota.

I am happy to respond to your questions.

CREDIT: Arts and Creativity Strengthen Our Nation: A Narrative and Message Guide For Advocates to Broaden and Deepen Support for Public Funding, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Washington, DC; 2021