

North Dakota Council on the Arts, SB2010*Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee**Additional Submission by Kim Konikow, Executive Director*February 2, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

I am submitting answers to questions that were asked of us during our Senate Appropriations Testimony in January, as well as attaching a document that pertains directly to our budget request.

OFFICE SPACE

Senator Mathern requested information on the current situation regarding ND Agency work spaces. For NDCA, a move to downtown Bismarck is a welcome opportunity. This falls directly in line with our recent Strategic Plan to be more accessible and visible to our constituents and the public. At the WSI building, the Arts Council was hidden away off the north parking lot, in an office space not conducive to visitors or the display of the State Art Collection.

NDCA left the WSI offices on March 13 and staff have been working remotely ever since. We began to look for alternatives and realized that working on the Capitol grounds in shared hotel or café space was not the best option; we would have no private space, storage or the ability to display the art collection. Working with John Boyle of Capitol Facilities, NDCA negotiated a lease in the old Woolworth building on N 4th and Main Street in downtown Bismarck. The landlord paid for the build out, participated in the actual move and we now have a 10-year lease in keeping with what we were paying at WSI. It is the perfect example of a private/public partnership and we are a part of building a healthy vibrant community and revitalization of a downtown area. In addition, the staff has been extremely productive working remotely and continuing their amazing work. We will open in late spring with part-time staffing.

FUNDRAISING

Senator Davison asked about NDCA's ability to fundraise outside of the State Legislature. There is a lack of private funds available in ND, and we can't raise funds from the same organizations that our constituents go to for annual dollars. State Agencies are quite low on the list of grant recipients for operations and salaries.

In the last year we have raised over \$130,000 from external sources specifically related to projects.

Raising funds is dependent on staff time and ability – and that is not possible with our current budget situation.

DATA COLLECTION

In response to Senator Davison's questions about data collection, NDCA has come a very long way, and we are proud of our abilities to embrace these recent changes. We've gone from an organization that could produce rudimentary reports, to a great number of valuable data reports that were included in the initial testimony packet. I hope you have had a chance to review some of these.

NDCA strives to be more than a granting agency, still responsibly granting funds, but also by facilitating programs that have a larger impact in line with our Strategic Plan. We are building our capacity from the ground up.

NDCA's Board is discussing how evaluation and data can be better accommodated and budgeted for.

They are discussing with staff how each of our grant programs can be designed and measured to show impact and value. Since we support the work of others, our own success is based on the success of our grantees. How do we measure that, without adding to the bureaucracy of current expectations?

We strive to create far-reaching programs that will achieve visible and measurable success to build capacity and educate and grow rural communities, such as through the statewide Creative Placemaking

Program in partnership with DOT and Tourism, Train the Trainers with several Native organizations, and our biennial Statewide Convenings in partnership with Commerce's Main Street Initiative.

In our Arts in Education grant programs we have new partnerships that will yield more impactful information through stronger evaluative techniques. And NDCA's work in Creative Aging through our Art For Life program is already a model for the nation.

Our national partners (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Arts Midwest, National Endowment for the Arts, and Americans for the Arts) help us create the broader reports of our reach across ND and how we rank by comparison to others. We recently were able to create internal reports on COVID's impact in the state.

NDCA is also taking the steps with a new online grants program from which we can gather more information and produce stronger reports. We are building the knowledge and skill base to ask the right questions to gain more information on our value and impact.

This is what is worth the investment in NDCA.

BUDGET REQUEST

Attached.