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# **New Directions in Federal Arts Policy ALAS 2021**

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# New Directions in Federal Arts Policy

***“We are nothing if we are not representative of our culture and have a means to celebrate who we are.” - Allentza Michel***

## Panelists

*Allentza Michel, Program Officer for Humanities, Arts, and Culture, American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Massachusetts)*

*Heather Noonan, Vice President for Advocacy, League of American Orchestras (Washington, DC)*

*Hal Real, Founder, World Cafe Live and Board Member, National Independent Venue Association (Pennsylvania)*

## Call to action

- Continue to advocate for substantial increases in funding of the federal cultural agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts. Until the Biden-Harris Administration release their budget proposals, the preferred messaging is “substantial increase.”
- Stay alert for updates on specific budget requests in the coming months and for additional pandemic relief requests.
- For advocacy talking points and specific federal requests generated by a coalition across the field, please refer to [The Arts Sector and COVID-19 Relief](#) and [The Arts and Cultural Sector: Federal Policy Actions](#).

## Federal arts policy - looking ahead

- We need to continue to reframe the arts as a right not a privilege.
- Arts and cultural policy exists beyond the federal cultural agencies (as vital as they are) and it is vital that we engage Congress and the White House on ways in which the federal government as a whole can support arts and culture. Proposals to create an Office of Arts and Culture with representation on the Domestic Policy Council supports this vision.
- Moving forward, the commercial and nonprofit sectors within the arts must work together to be successful. Let’s focus on output and mission not legal structure as our advocacy efforts have been greatly enhanced by greater engagement of the commercial sector.
- Making economic arguments continues to be effective and federal advocacy during the pandemic has shown this.
- We should increase our aspirations and pursue 4x support rather than incremental increases in federal funding we have seen.
- Lobbying on the Hill, grassroots advocacy, and constituent engagement (like informing your constituents about federal relief funding opportunities) are all important.

### **Creative workforce**

- We stand to learn (and also need to unlearn) from past federal programs like WPA and CETA in creating new creative workforce programs.
- Keep abreast about the development of the Put Creative Workers to Work policy platform and endorse and amplify this work.
- Stay tuned for forthcoming American Academy of Arts and Sciences research on the creative workforce.

### **Arts education and public education**

- We need to solidify the gains we have made over the last 20 years and have arts education be recognized as a core part of public education.
- When seeking to influence arts education policy, link advocacy on federal issues to local efforts with the knowledge that the majority of educational policy is set at the local level. Some call this the 90/7/3 rule - 90% of education policy is local; 7% is state; and 3% is federal.
- Emphasizing the need for arts programs to be supported in Title 1 and reintegrating arts education performance measurement into the Department of Education's National Assessment are the most immediate needs for arts education policy at the federal level.

### **Reopening the creative sector(particularly venues)**

- The Shuttered Venue Operators Grant represents an important arts advocacy result but we must ensure its success and look ahead to needs for a refill.
- The creative economy argument(s) is critical to our current advocacy efforts given the backdrop of continued COVID relief and looking ahead to recovery.
- The National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) is defining a mission beyond the pandemic and the focus areas are: a music education initiative, removing barriers to entry to the sector, and diversity in the workforce.

### **Immigration policy and the arts - artists visas and beyond**

- The new environment in Washington presents opportunities to look at immigration reform including the artist visa process.
- In this moment, our cultural relations and public diplomacy efforts can be advanced by moving into a simplified process that allows for more exchange to take place.