Benefits of Participation

About WESTAF

Western States Arts Federation is a regional nonprofit arts service organization dedicated to the creative advancement and preservation of the arts. WESTAF fulfills its mission to strengthen the financial, organizational, and policy infrastructure of the arts in the West by assisting state arts agencies, arts organizations, and artists in their quest to serve diverse audiences, enrich the lives of local communities, and provide access to the arts and arts education for all citizens. Through innovative programming, advocacy, research, technology, and grantmaking, WESTAF encourages the creative development and preservation of the arts regionally and through a national network of customers and alliances.

Founded in 1974, WESTAF is located in Denver and governed by a 22-member board of trustees comprised of arts leaders in the West. The organization serves the largest constituent territory of the six U.S. regional arts organizations and includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai’i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

WESTAF regularly sponsors cultural policy forums throughout the region that bring together experts and leaders to address critical issues that affect the arts. These forums provide an opportunity to reflect on cultural policy issues particular to the West, to introduce cultural policy practitioners in the region to one another, and to expand the acquaintance of national and international discussions of cultural policy with thinking and thinkers in the West.

Introduction to WESTAF’s Benefits Menu

The state arts agencies in the West are WESTAF’s primary constituents. This document describes the menu of benefits available to WESTAF’s state arts agency partners. The benefits menu is designed to provide each participating agency with services of value that it can employ in its work. Because agency needs differ substantially, no single benefits menu can be expected to address the needs of each participating state. Accordingly, WESTAF takes a flexible approach in the administration of benefits.

We invite you to examine this document and then call on and work with WESTAF staff to design the mix of benefits that is most useful in your work. WESTAF is prepared to design customized benefits that best address the needs of each participating state arts agency.

Creative Use of WESTAF Benefits

Every state in the WESTAF region is entitled to the core benefits outlined in this document. These benefits are considered to have an annual value that, when combined with other services, reflects an appropriate level of service for the state-participation fee. State arts agencies, however, are encouraged to think of additional ways that WESTAF might assist them with their work by providing services not listed here. Please know that WESTAF is prepared to shape benefits in a way that best addresses the long- and short-term needs of each agency. The following examples illustrate the creative manner in which participating states have used WESTAF services. Most of these services have been delivered at no additional cost.

- WESTAF has conducted confidential administrative reviews for boards and staffs at state arts agencies, focusing on organizational structure and administrative processes.
- WESTAF has provided advice on the refinement of the grant application process in state arts agencies.
- WESTAF staff members have met with the personnel of state arts agencies in several states and
helped them refine application forms to make them user friendly and more efficient to administer.

- WESTAF has a wide network of contacts to help states in their search for experienced and skilled executive directors. WESTAF can also provide support for executive director search processes.

- Members of the WESTAF staff possess expertise on a wide variety of issues and have been used as faculty for workshops, moderators for group discussions, and as presenters at statewide conferences.

- As part of the self-evaluation process of state arts agencies, WESTAF has conducted focus groups with field constituents to identify areas in which an agency might improve and/or extend services.

- WESTAF has participated in meetings with major partners of state arts agencies. WESTAF staff are qualified to join in the discussion about the quality and depth of the services offered by agencies and support plans for streamlining services. WESTAF has gathered and convened facilitators and participants for a statewide task force to re-envision state arts agencies.

Note: All fees and benefits are deliverable within WESTAF’s fiscal year: October 1–September 30. Any deliverables not received at the conclusion of the year cannot be carried over to the next year unless WESTAF’s executive director explicitly agrees to such a carryover in writing.

**Grant Programs**

**TourWest**
WESTAF, with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, provides TourWest grants for the presentation of out-of-state performing artists and performing-arts groups. The NEA designates underserved communities as eligible for grants awarded through this program. The term *underserved communities* is meant to describe communities for whom access to the arts is limited by geographic isolation, economic constraints, physical limitations, or historic patterns of exclusion. Grants of up to $2,500 per project are available.

The TourWest program includes a safety-net provision. Through this mechanism, any state with a large disparity between its five-year TourWest funding average and its most recent TourWest panel-approved grant level is offered funding to cover this gap. These funds are allocated to the state’s presenting community in consultation with the executive director of the state arts agency.

**Independent Music on Tour**
Independent Music on Tour (IMTour) is a grant program for tour-ready independent musicians from the Front Range—including Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, and Colorado Springs. IMTour is committed to artistic excellence, audience development, and sustainable touring practices for musicians and nonprofit presenters in the West and seeks to meet these goals by offering resources to touring independent musicians and grants to nonprofit organizations to present independent musicians.

**Research and Advocacy**

**Position Papers & Research**
As an experienced research organization, WESTAF regularly initiates research projects to benefit the state arts agencies of the West as well as the broader arts community. Research papers on a variety of topics can be prepared for participating states as a service of WESTAF. Two papers or consultancies are available per year to each state arts agency. Such papers are generally about 10 pages in length.
Papers have been completed on topics such as: defining culture and the arts as a cluster of economic activity, an overview and summary of international programs at state arts agencies, economic arguments for the public funding of the arts, opportunities for collaboration between various cultural agencies, and background information concerning the development of cultural trust legislation. WESTAF provides additional ad hoc research assistance, such as searches of periodicals, books, ephemera and other information sources to address needs as they arise.

**Arts Advocacy**
WESTAF is engaged in several projects designed to increase the region's capacity for advocacy aimed at advancing public support for the arts in the West. Executive directors of western state arts agencies meet twice annually to discuss ways to move support for these agencies forward. Recently, members of an arts council board were engaged by WESTAF in an advocacy strategy and training process. WESTAF also provides up to $10,000 a year to each of the 13 states in the WESTAF region to support professional-level advocacy work and offers assistance in developing effective advocacy messaging.

**Multicultural Initiatives**
Recognizing the increasing diversity of the West, WESTAF has established a set of organizational core values and goals to make it more representative of and responsive to the cultures of the region. WESTAF strives to reflect the values, insights, spirit, and knowledge of communities of color, indigenous peoples, and other underrepresented ethnic communities in the West. To better represent these communities, WESTAF works to ensure that its programs and initiatives incorporate the diverse perspectives of the region. WESTAF proactively engages state arts agencies and arts and cultural policy leaders in efforts that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity at the local, state, and regional level. The plan for activities in this area is based on the report of WESTAF’s Multicultural Advisory Committee, a group of 13 individuals from across the West that advises WESTAF on ways it can expand and strengthen its commitment to better represent the region's diverse communities.

As part of its multicultural initiatives, in 2010, WESTAF established its Emerging Leaders of Color Professional Development Program. The program promotes multicultural leadership in the arts by building a cohort of cultural leaders of color in the West who are committed to advancing the arts and creating a network to support their careers and the cultural interests of the people they represent. In 2014, the committee convened its fourth Emerging Leaders of Color Professional Development Seminar October 1-3, in Denver. Participants in the two-day meeting engaged in coursework and activities designed to strengthen competencies and prepare them for leadership positions in the field. The seminar also provided participants with information intended to deepen their understanding of the arts in the United States and how public support for culture contributes to the vibrancy of the sector.

**Professional Development and Consulting**

**Advocacy Leadership Convening**
Full travel and meeting support is available for state arts agency executive directors, trustee chairs, and directors of state advocacy organizations to attend WESTAF’s Arts Leadership and Advocacy Seminar. This meeting brings a small group of arts leaders from the West to Washington, DC each year to meet with members of Congress and their staffs, engage in briefings regarding the status and future prospects for federal arts support, and to join in discussions with the WESTAF trustees on ways to generate more state government support for the work of state arts agencies. The meeting also provides opportunities for state arts leaders to share advocacy strategies and learn about new approaches for successful advocacy.

**Executive Director Forums**
Full travel and meeting support is available for the executive directors of state arts agencies to attend WESTAF-sponsored executive director forums. State arts agency directors select the topics and
professional development issues they would like to engage in at the forums. Each forum presents one or more invited speakers or workshop leaders. These gatherings also serve as an opportunity to develop regional and sub-regional collaborations.

**Technical Assistance and Strategic Consultation**
Technical assistance and strategic consultation are available for special projects and unexpected challenges. This special assistance is usually delivered in the form of special research, the underwriting of an out-of-state speaker who can affect the outcome of a discussion on a critical issue, or an on-site consultant who can address operational issues such as data management, grant form design, planning, or on-site staff or board training. This benefit is available on a limited basis.

**Technology Needs Analysis**
WESTAF employs full-time staff and off-site contractors who are experienced in conducting a variety of technology needs assessments, including an inventory of hardware, the skill sets of technology staff, and software design. Recommendations in these areas are made based on the agency’s goals. Examples of completed projects include a technology needs assessment related to grant programs, a review of an agency’s readiness to launch a new technology project, and advice on a decision to outsource certain technology services.

**Staff Professional Development**
WESTAF offers travel support and/or subsidies for professional development seminars and networking opportunities for selected staff of state arts agencies. In recent years, professional development seminars have been convened in the areas of community arts, organizational development, accessibility, literature, folk arts, public art, visual arts, and public information.

**Tech Consultation**
A limited number of hours of technology-related professional consultation are available via telephone. WESTAF staff can provide advice on most tech-related issues. They can also draw on a pool of software- and web-development professionals across the country for further assistance if needed.

**Presentations**
Development of one presentation on a topic chosen by the state arts agency is available each year. Presentations have covered such topics as budgets, strategic plans, and the economic impact of the arts.

**Custom Benefits**
WESTAF can offer an increased level of travel support in place of other services. Additional travel support is negotiable and is determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Technology Projects**
WESTAF is an experienced technology developer, with six distinct projects that benefit the arts and creative industries. WESTAF’s technology products are not discounted for participating states. However, states in the WESTAF region can benefit from these projects by: a) arranging for cost-advantageous bundling of two or more technology products; b) negotiating free or discounted pilot programs for organizations within the WESTAF region; and c) receiving no-cost, on-site demonstrations of one or more of these programs in state conferences, arts agency governing board meetings, and other forums where such in-person demonstrations would be beneficial.

**ZAPPlication.org® (ZAPP®)**
The premiere online application and adjudication management system used by more than 700 art fairs and festivals and more than 70,000 artists nationwide. ZAPP provides event staff with a convenient and easy-to-manage platform for collecting, reviewing, and jurying applications and allows artists to easily apply
online to multiple art shows using high-quality digital images of their artwork that are stored in an online profile.

CallforEntry.org™ (CaFÉ™)
The leading online application and adjudication management system used by nearly 150,000 artists and over 500 public art programs, galleries, museums, and educational institutions to manage public art commissions, exhibitions, fellowships, and visual art competitions.

Creative Vitality™ Suite (CVSuite™)
A research-based economic development tool that provides high-quality creative economy data and reporting. The tool contains information on nearly 80 creative industries and 60 creative occupations, nonprofit cultural revenues, and state arts agency granting information and includes an interactive granting map that displays the distribution of state arts agency grants by region, county, ZIP code, or Congressional district.

PublicArtArchive.org™ (PAA™)
A free, searchable online and mobile accessible catalog of completed public artworks in the United States. The Archive makes public art and its processes more accessible, displaying images alongside extensive descriptions, including audio and video supplementary files when available. Locate public art pieces, create custom walking tours, and access images and data via the free mobile site.

GOGrantsOnline.org™ (GO™)
A powerful, flexible, and affordable online grants management system designed with local and state art agencies in mind. GO allows administrators to customize system elements to match their unique workflows and provides all the data collection, communication, reporting, and management tools they need to simplify the grant making process.

YouJudgeIt.org™
An affordable, easy-to-use, web-based tool for managing competitions of all types. WESTAF’s latest adjudication solution for managing application and jury processes and was designed to be simple, accessible, and affordable—even for organizations on the tightest of budgets.