

2021 Nebraska Arts Advocacy Toolkit

NEBRASKANS
FOR THE
ARTS





Thank you for being an Arts Advocate!

The Nebraskans for the Arts (NFTA) has created this Advocacy Toolkit as a resource for those interested in developing the knowledge and skills to be effective advocates with the Nebraska Legislature.

Nebraska has a nonpartisan Unicameral, or single-house legislative body. This presents advocates with a unique opportunity for citizens to interact with a group of 49 State Senators – the smallest legislative body in the United States – as a bill moves from introduction through three rounds of debate before final passage.

Whether you are new to advocacy or have been helping for many years to help promote the arts, and arts policy, this toolkit provides you with the information to communicate with Nebraska legislators in 2021.

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Arts Advocacy Day

Event Agenda

Session One: State and Federal Updates

Wednesday, February 17th

9:00 am – 10:45 am

Welcome		NFTA's Board President, Rex Barker, & Interim Executive Director, Skyler Dykes
Keynote Speaker		Nina Ozlu-Tunceli, Executive Director of Americans for the Arts' Action Fund
Issues Briefing		Suzanne Wise (Executive Director, Nebraska Arts Council) & Jennifer Jackson (Executive Director, Heartland Counseling Services, Inc.)
Recognition of the 2021 NebraskaArts Award Recipients		Patsy Koch Johns (Nebraska State Board of Education & NFTA Board Member)
Closing Remarks		Skyler Dykes

Session Two: Advocacy Training

Wednesday, February 17th

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

This portion of the event will begin with a brief advocacy training led by Jo Giles, the Policy and Training Director at Coalition for a Strong Nebraska. Then, attendees will meet in breakout rooms with their “district cohorts” to create a game plan for the meetings with their State Senators. The session will conclude with a Q & A.

Event Agenda

Session Three: Nebraska Arts Council Water Cooler Session

Thursday, February 18th

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Each month, the Nebraska Arts Council invites arts leaders from across the state to gather for an informal presentation and conversation, events known as “Water Cooler Sessions.” This month, NAC is partnering with NFTA to focus on how to make virtual events more accessible. Brad Holt from Sorenson Communications will talk about how to work with ASL interpreters in a virtual platform. Donna Faust Amen from Outlook Nebraska will visit about audio description. Linda Hilliar, Program Coordinator at NAC will talk about different grant programs that are available to help with these services.

Register to secure your spot at the [Nebraska Arts Council website](#).

Meetings with State Senators

Thursday, February 18th – Monday, March 8th

This year, Nebraska Arts Advocacy Day attendees will meet with their State Senator at a specified time in the weeks following the event. All meetings will take place virtually and will last approximately 20 minutes. In keeping with previous years, your meeting will take place with others from your district – you’ll have the opportunity to meet each other and plan an agenda for your meeting during Session Two.

Wondering what to discuss? We encourage you to peruse the “2021 Menu of Talking Points for the Arts” and “Additional Resources” sections of this packet.

2021 Menu of Talking Points for the Arts

The following are some talking points we wish advocates to deliver during the 2021 legislative session. **Choose 2-3 points relevant to you that you wish to share.** Just remember, make your conversation personal and heartfelt. Be genuine in your enthusiasm for the arts by talking about what *you* know best, and most importantly, say thank you!

The Arts in Nebraska

- ✓ The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production accounts for **\$2,943,343,023** and **2.4%** of the **Nebraska** economy, contributing **28,735 jobs** (2017).
- ✓ In 2017, 57% of Nebraskan adults reported attending a live music, theatre, or dance performance.

Nebraska Arts Council

- ✓ The Nebraska Arts Council grants programs are a catalyst for bringing a diversity of arts programs to children and adults across Nebraska. Grants are matched by other resources, leveraging these investments.

Nebraska Cultural Endowment

- ✓ The Nebraska Cultural Endowment is the first cultural endowment in the nation to sustain both the arts and humanities; its resources support the programs and grants funded by Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Arts Council.
- ✓ The Nebraska Cultural Endowment is a true private-public partnership; private gifts are matched by a State fund and are used to benefit communities.

2021 Menu of Talking Points for the Arts

LB142: Nebraska Cultural Endowment

- ✓ LB142 proposes to provide for the transfer of \$1,000,000 annually from the General Fund to the Nebraska Cultural Endowment through the year 2030. This would be an annual increase of \$500,000 and greatly increase the potential of both the Nebraska Arts Council and Humanities Nebraska to make an impact in the state.

LB264: Cultural Districts

- ✓ LB264 proposes to add \$100,000 annually to the Nebraska Arts Council's agency budget for the purpose of providing grants to designated Nebraska Cultural Districts.
- ✓ As a result of your advocacy during the 2020 Legislative Session, Nebraska is now one of 18 states with a statewide cultural district program.
- ✓ The desired outcomes of cultural district programs are to: attract artists and cultural enterprises, encourage business and job development, establish tourism destinations, preserve historical buildings, enhance property values, and more.

LB325: Art Therapy Practice Act

- ✓ LB325 amends relevant sections of the Uniform Credentialing Act and Mental Health Practice Act to create a certification in Art Therapy in Nebraska. This certification would be administered by the Mental Health Practice Board.
- ✓ The ideation for this bill began in 2018, the same year The 407 Credentialing Review Process for Art Therapy began. In 2020, this review ended with final reports in support of the proposal being issues by the Technical Review Committee, Board of Health, and Director. LB325 would establish what was approved during this review.

LB566: Shovel-Ready

- ✓ LB566 proposes to create a grant program, administered by the Department of Economic Development, for cultural organizations that were forced to halt a capital campaign or expansion project due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ There are dozens of cultural organizations across the State of Nebraska that would be impacted by this bill, ranging from the Post Playhouse in Crawford to the Isis Theatre in Crete to The UNION for Contemporary Art in Omaha.

2021 Menu of Talking Points for the Arts

COVID-19 and Its Impact on the Arts

- ✓ According to data from Americans for the Arts, the COVID-19 pandemic has made an over 5 million dollar impact on Nebraska's cultural economy.
- ✓ The same survey found that 1 in 10 cultural organizations were **not** confident their organization would survive the impact of the pandemic and that over 100,000 arts workers had been laid off or furloughed.
- ✓ In research conducted by Indiana University's Arts, Entrepreneurship, & Innovation Lab it was found that "the arts offer economic diversification and can rapidly recover from economic downturns." (*National Assembly of Arts Agencies*)

The Arts Mean. . .

. . . Better Skills

- ✓ Arts spark creativity and innovation. The Conference Board reports that **creativity is among the top 5 applied skills sought by business leaders**—with 72 percent saying creativity is of high importance when hiring.
- ✓ Nebraska's vibrant arts community makes us a strong recruiting draw in the 21st century economy and sets us apart from other states. **Nebraska's arts sector generates jobs, attracts businesses, and cultivates innovation of employees by encouraging and developing creative skills.**

. . . Better Schools

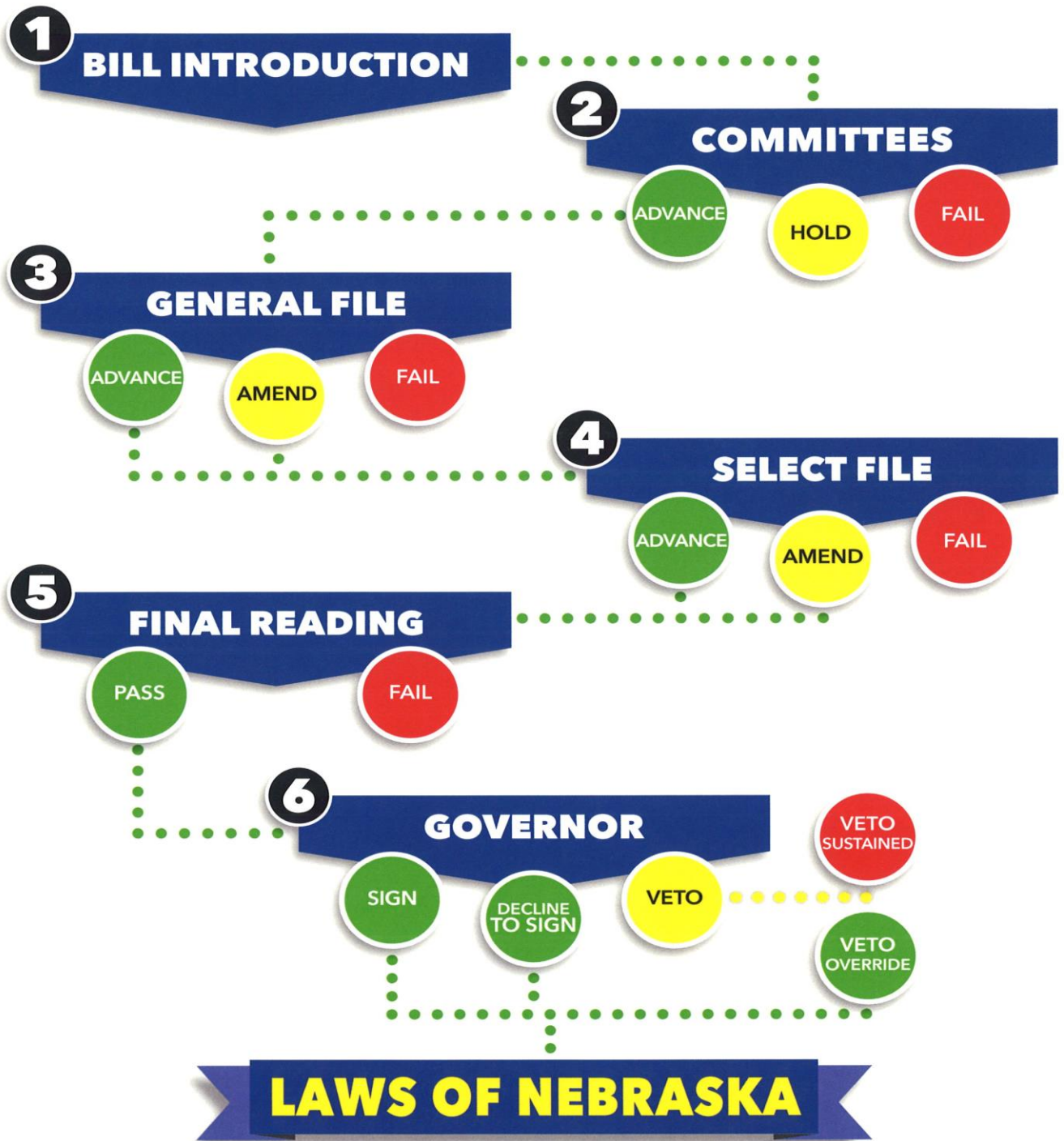
- ✓ Students with high arts participation and low socioeconomic status have a **4% dropout rate – five times lower** than their socioeconomic status peers.
- ✓ Data from the College Board shows that students who take four years of arts and music classes while in high school average almost **98 points higher on their SAT scores** than students who take only one-half year or less.

. . . Better Communities

- ✓ The arts are essential to the health and vitality of our communities and our nation. They improve the quality of life in our cities and town. They enhance community development; spur urban renewal; attract new businesses; and draw tourism dollars.

Lawmaking in Nebraska

HOW LAWS ARE MADE IN THE UNICAMERAL



Credit/Source: "Nebraska Legislature 101: How a Bill Becomes a Law," Nebraska Appleseed

Lawmaking in Nebraska: The Details

The lawmaking process in Nebraska officially begins when a senator introduces a bill into the Legislature, which meets each January. But the process actually begins much earlier, when a senator first begins to formulate ideas for new laws.

Anyone can present an idea for a new law: a concerned citizen, special interest groups, state agencies, the governor... But, before the Legislature can formally consider the idea, it must be introduced as a bill by a senator or committee.

Committees debate and propose amendments to bills, and the full Legislature has an opportunity to debate each bill at least two times before its final passage. Senators may propose amendments to alter a bill at each stage of debate.

Read through the steps below to learn how a bill becomes a Nebraska state law.

Idea

First, a senator and his or her staff research a problem and study possible legislative remedies. A senator may introduce a bill to create a new law, repeal an existing law or change a law.

The Legislature has a research division that helps senators with their research projects. Much of their research is done during the period between sessions called the interim. During this time, legislative committees study a variety of issues that have been outlined in interim study resolutions passed by the Legislature.

A senator brings his or her idea for a new law to a bill drafter, who works with the senator to transform the idea into the proper legal form for a legislative bill. Unlike some states, bills introduced in Nebraska may contain only one subject.

Introduction

Most bills are introduced during the first 10 days of the legislative session which begins each January. In order to introduce a bill, a senator files it with the Clerk of the Legislature. The clerk reads the title of the bill into the record, assigns it a number and prints copies of it for public and legislative use.

Introduction (continued)

The Legislative Fiscal Office prepares budget statements that estimate the anticipated change in state, county, or municipal expenses or revenue under the provisions of each bill. This statement is called a fiscal note. The fiscal note contains three estimates. One estimate is calculated by the fiscal office staff; another is prepared by the governor's budget office; and a third is prepared by the affected state agency. In addition, the fiscal office prepares appropriations bills ("A" bills), which accompany bills that have a fiscal impact.

Committee

A nine-member Reference Committee then determines which bills will go to each one of the 14 standing committees. With the exception of a few technical bills, most bills introduced into the Legislature must receive a public hearing by a committee. At hearings, citizens have a chance to express their opinions to committee members. Testimony is recorded and transcribed to become a part of the official committee record.

After the hearing, committees may:

- vote to send the bill to general file with or without amendments,
- indefinitely postpone the bill, or
- take no action on it.

General File

General File is the first time the full Legislature has the opportunity to debate and vote on bills. At this stage, senators consider amendments, which may be proposed by committees and by individual senators. Many people consider General File to be the most crucial stage of the legislative process because it is where most compromises are reached. It takes a majority vote of the Legislature (25 votes) to adopt amendments or move a bill from General File to the next stage of consideration.

Enrollment & Review

Commonly referred to as "E & R," enrollment and review is a process by which previously adopted amendments are incorporated into a bill, and the bill is checked for technical and grammatical accuracy.

Select File

Select File is the second debating and voting stage. This step allows another opportunity for amendment, compromise and reflection. Bills on Select File may be indefinitely postponed or advanced to the next stage. After Select File, bills are sent to E & R again to be rechecked. Bills then are reprinted for Final Reading.

Final Reading

Before final passage, all bills are constitutionally required to be read aloud in their entirety by the Clerk of the Legislature, unless three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature votes to waive the requirement. A bill may not be amended or debated on Final Reading, but may be returned to Select File for a specific amendment. Bills may not be voted on for final passage until at least five legislative days after the bill is introduced, and one legislative day after it is placed on Final Reading.

A proposed constitutional amendment requires a three-fifths vote of the elected members (30) to place it on the general election ballot and a four-fifths vote (40) to place it on a primary or special election ballot. All other bills without an emergency clause require a simple majority vote before going to the governor. A bill with an emergency clause requires a vote of two-thirds (33 members) of the Legislature.

Governor

After the Legislature passes a bill on Final Reading, it goes to the governor for consideration. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to decide what to do with a bill. If the governor signs a bill or declines to act on it, the bill becomes a state law. The governor may veto a bill, and he or she has the authority to strike specific budget appropriations (line-item veto). The Legislature may override any gubernatorial veto, although it takes a vote of 30 senators to do so.

Laws of Nebraska

Most bills passed and approved by the governor become law three calendar months after the Legislature adjourns. However, bills may take effect before that date if they contain an emergency clause or a specified operative date.

How to Make Your Voice Heard

The following is a list of ways you can impact the law-making process in Nebraska.

A few of these are new as of 2021 – created to ensure Nebraskans can safely engage with the Nebraska Legislature during the COVID-19 pandemic – so be sure to review, even if you’ve been an active advocate in previous years.

1. **Write a letter to or schedule a meeting with your State Senator.** Unsure as to who your State Senator is? Use the [Find My Senator](#) feature on the Nebraska Legislature website.
2. If your representative is unavailable, **meet with a State Senator’s Legislative Aide.** Meeting with a staff member can be just as influential, since staff carefully brief the Senator on meetings and issues.
3. **Testify in support, against, or in a neutral capacity on a bill.** Every bill is assigned a public hearing date to be reviewed by one of the Legislature’s 14 standing committees. Use the [Nebraska Bill Tracker](#) to stay up-to-date on the current status, including notice of a public hearing date, of any bills that you believe would impact you.
4. Unable to attend or anxious about attending a public hearing in person? You can **submit written testimony or a position letter.** Written testimony must be submitted in-person at the State Capitol between 8:30 – 9:30 am the day of a hearing. Position letters must be submitted by noon the business day prior to the hearing to the committee’s email address. You can [learn more about options 3 and 4 here.](#)
5. Go to the [Nebraska Legislature website](#) and **submit comments online.** These comments are made available to legislators and their staff.

Additional Resources

Additional Advocacy Resources

This toolkit is just one of the many resources you can use to strengthen your advocacy. Below are some other resources to explore, offering facts about the arts and culture sector in Nebraska and beyond...

1. [Arts and Creativity Strengthen Our Nation](#): A Narrative and Message Guide (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)
2. [The Arts and Culture Sector's Contributions to Economic Recovery and Resiliency in the United States: Key Findings](#) (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)
3. [ANALYSIS: COVID-19's Impacts on Arts and Culture](#) (COVID-19 RSFLG Data and Assessment Working Group via arts.gov)
4. [National Arts Education Association Advocacy Toolkit](#)
5. [Coalition for a Strong Nebraska Advocacy Resources](#) (including: How a Bill Becomes a Law in Nebraska, Lobbying Rules for 501(c)3 Organizations, and "Being Heard: Voices from Marginalized Communities")



WHY THE ARTS MATTER IN NEBRASKA

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)

GDP & JOBS

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.



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

NEBRASKA ARTS FACTS

NEBRASKA ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR REPRESENTS 2.4% OF STATE'S GDP & 28,735 JOBS

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector contributes **\$2.9 billion** to Nebraska's economy, representing 2.4% of the state's GDP—a larger share than some other industries in the state.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2017.



BONUS: In 2017, NE arts & culture jobs generated \$1.5 billion in total compensation.

NUMBER OF ARTS-RELATED BUSINESSES AND JOBS (Commercial & Nonprofit Arts Organizations Combined)

BUSINESSES

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: Americans for the Arts, *Creative Industries*, 2017.



In Nebraska, **3,242 Arts-Related Businesses** employ **18,405 people**.

- In Douglas County, **1,264 Arts-Related Businesses** employ **10,866 people**.
- In Lancaster County, **597 Arts-Related Businesses** employ **3,303 people**.
- In Sarpy County, **212 Arts-Related Businesses** employ **647 people**.

Source: Americans for the Arts, *Creative Industries*, *Nebraska* report, 2017.



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & THEIR AUDIENCES

ECONOMICS

Nationally, the nonprofit arts industry alone generates **\$166.3 billion** in economic activity annually that supports **4.6 million jobs** and generates **\$27.5 billion** in federal, state, and local government revenue.

- Spending by arts audiences generated **\$102.5 billion** to local businesses.

Source: Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5*, 2017.



In 2015, the Nebraska arts and culture sector employed thousands of FTE jobs and generated millions of dollars in economic activity. Nonprofit arts groups helped cultivate that activity.

- In Lincoln specifically, nonprofit arts groups generated **\$50.7 million** in economic activity. Audiences of 2.3 million people added another **\$48.3 million** in related spending for a total of **\$99.0 million** for the city in 2015, and this generated **\$9.8 million** in local and state government revenues and 2,976 FTE jobs.

Source: Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5*, *Lincoln* report, 2017.



PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN GRANTS TO NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & ARTISTS

FUNDING

Q So how much is the federal government investing in the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)?

A Congress has proposed allocating **\$162.25 million** to the NEA in FY 2020, which has been relatively level for the last several years. This amounts to 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 \$1 per capita!

Source: Americans for the Arts Action Fund, 2020.

Read: "Funding The Arts Is Good For The Nation," *The Hill*, 2015.

Q What about Nebraska—how much does state government budget to the Nebraska Arts Council each year?

A In FY 2020, the state allocated **\$1,508,852** to the Nebraska Arts Council. The Nebraska Arts Council also received **\$780,600** in federal NEA funds, which the Council re-granted to dozens of cultural organizations throughout the state. An additional 20 nonprofit arts organizations received direct grants from the NEA totaling \$395,000.

Source: NEA and NASAA, 2020.

Read: "Arts Mean Business for Nebraska," Pamela Thompson, *NET News*, 2018.



- Patsy Koch Johns, State Board of Education member;
Board President - Nebraskans for the Arts

IN THE GOOD LIFE STATE, THE ARTS UNITE US

The Lied Center for Performing Arts offers dynamic programming for K-12 students & teachers, college students, and community members of all ages in towns across the state.

> [Learn more here.](#)

>Learn more [here](#).

• **Suzanne Wise** is the recipient of the 2018 Gary Young Award for extraordinary public support for the arts, an award of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Wise serves as Executive Director of Nebraska Arts Council. > [More](#)

- **Doug Zbylut** is Executive Director of Nebraskans for the Arts, a grassroots organization dedicated to advocating for the arts and arts education. > [More](#)

- **Patsy Koch Johns** is President of Nebraskans for the Arts and an elected representative of the Nebraska State Board of Education. > [More](#)

- **Jordan Huether** is the 2018 Governor's Arts Awardee. > [More](#)

- **Todd Simon** is a passionate contemporary arts collector and supporter, serving on the boards of the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts and United States Artists > [More](#)

- Visit Nebraska provides a searchable database of arts destinations and events throughout the state [here](#).
- Visit Omaha can direct you to the city's best venues of live theater and dance performances [here](#).
- An interactive map of Nebraska Arts Council-supported arts events in Nebraska [here](#).

Nebraskans for the Arts
www.nebraskansforthearts.org
Nebraska Museums Association
www.nebrskamuseums.org
Nebraska Art Teachers Association
www.nebrskaarteducators.org

- Start in **Omaha** for a variety of art museum experiences, ranging from the twenty galleries and public art of Joslyn Museum to the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art.
- Travel north in June to enjoy the **Norfolk Arts Center** and take in the Great American Comedy Festival at the Johnny Carson Theatre.

- The capitol city area of **Lincoln** offers a wide variety of plays and musicals through venues connected with the Lincoln Theatre Alliance.

- **Scottsbluff** is a hub of creativity through the Midwest Theatre and the West Nebraska Arts Center.

- **North Platte** was the nation's stop for traveling WWII soldiers; now travelers stop to enjoy the activities at the Prairie Arts Center and the Neville Center for Performing Arts.

- Visiting the center of state brings you to the center of art events and activities coordinated by the **Kearney Cultural Partnership**.

- The halfway point to St. Patrick's Day is always a celebration when you attend the **Greeley Irish Festival**

JOIN THE ARTS ACTION FUND FOR FREE TODAY!

VISIT US: ArtsActionFund.org/join

CALL US: 202.371.2830 x2067

FOLLOW US: Arts Action Fund | @ArtsActionFund | #ArtsVote



To download this fact sheet, "Why the Arts Matter in Nebraska" with corresponding resource links visit, www.ArtsActionFund.org/StateFactsheets.

Advocacy Toolkit

**NEBRASKANS
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Join Nebraskans for the Arts in our advocacy. Sign up as a member and for our alerts.

Our work would not be possible without the support from non-profit organizations, local arts agencies, businesses, and individuals. Thank you for your support and commitment to advancing the arts as essential to the lives and learning of all Nebraskans!

SIGN UP TODAY



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