



2025 State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers Professional Development Institute

September 16-18, Des Moines, Iowa

Agenda

For more than 30 years, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) have supported professional development programming for state and jurisdictional arts agency (SAA) arts education managers. The annual Professional Development Institute (PDI) provides meaningful leadership development and technical assistance for this multifaceted field. As a result, arts education managers are knowledgeable leaders in their field through a peer network that new and seasoned managers alike find invaluable.

The purpose of the Professional Development Institute is to equip participants with skills necessary to succeed in their roles as state arts agency arts education managers. PDI attendees will gain job-specific tools and knowledge that are relevant across a wide array of state needs and circumstances.

Drawing inspiration from the capacity building strategies and relationships cultivated in Iowa, the 2025 Professional Development Institute explores topics and questions relevant to all 56 states and jurisdictions.

Guiding Question & Outcomes

How can arts education managers envision future-ready arts learning systems and resources that benefit students, educators, communities and workforces across their states and jurisdictions?

Learning Outcome 1: Participants will explore how arts education can cultivate transferable, creative and technical skills that prepare learners for a variety of career pathways in their own states and jurisdictions

Learning Outcome 2: Participants will examine how rural arts education practices engage local leadership and build on each community's distinct strengths to develop impactful programs.

Learning Outcome 3: Participants will review and synthesize local, state and regional resources and learning frameworks that promote the health, well-being and overall capacity of SAA arts education managers.

Monday, September 15

All times are Central Daylight Time.

6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

New Arts Education Managers Dinner
(by invitation)

With Nancy Daugherty, Arts Education Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts

Fresko
909 Locust St, Suite 103
Des Moines, IA 50309

Tuesday, September 16

All times are Central Daylight Time.

8:30 a.m.

Bus departs hotel for Mainframe Studios

Surety Hotel
206 6th Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50309

8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

Arrival and Breakfast (provided)

Mainframe Studios
900 Keosauqua Way
Des Moines, IA 50309

9:45 – 10:15 a.m.

Welcome Remarks

Kimberly Washburn Motte, Chair, Arts Education Working Group (AEWG); Deputy Director, South Carolina Arts Commission

Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG; Program Officer, Arts Education & Lifelong Learning, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Jennie Knoebel, Site Host, AEWG; Senior Grants and Programs Manager, Iowa Arts Council, Iowa Economic Development Authority

Libby Crimmings, Community Engagement Coordinator,
Mainframe Studios

Nancy Daugherty, Arts Education Specialist, National Endowment
for the Arts

*Arts Education Working Group: Matthew Anderson, Arts Education
Director, North Dakota Council on the Arts; Nancy Daugherty, Arts
Education Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts; Tamar
Krames, Arts in Education Program Manager, Washington State Arts
Commission (ArtsWA); Meghan McFerrin, Arts Education Project
Manager, NASAA; Martha Piscuskas, Program Director, Maine Arts
Commission; Danica Rosengren, Arts Education Specialist, Hawai'i
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts; Jenni Ryan, Arts
Education Program Specialist, Missouri Arts Council*

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.

Arts Education Peer Learning Working Session

Session Facilitator: Tamar Krames, Arts in Education Program
Manager, ArtsWA

This interactive session brings together state arts agency arts
education managers to actively share and reflect on current
trends, challenges and promising practices across the field.
Through guided discussions and collaborative exercises,
participants identify shared strengths and explore practical
approaches. This collaborative process equips attendees to build
meaningful peer-to-peer partnerships and apply insights that
enhance their leadership and impact in arts education across their
states and jurisdictions.

11:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Break

11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Des Moines Arts Education Community Panel, Part 1

Session Facilitator: Danica Rosengren, Arts Education Specialist,
Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts

Christine Her, Executive Director, ArtForce Iowa; Seso Martenes,
Artist, Mainframe Studios; Joseph Parrish, Cofounder and
Executive Director, Adventures in Social Development; Christina
Smith, President/CEO, Community Support Advocates

In this session, teaching artists and organizations at Des Moines
based Mainframe Studios and beyond share how their programs
respond to local needs through hands-on practice, mentorship and
creative learning experiences. Their work builds creative thinking,
technical skills and career awareness while fostering
collaboration across arts organizations. Participants gain ideas

and inspiration to further advance opportunities that benefit students, educators, communities and the workforce.

12:15 – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch (provided)

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Des Moines Arts Education Community Panel, Part 2

Christine Her, Executive Director, ArtForce Iowa; Seso Martenes, Artist, Mainframe Studios; Joseph Parrish, Cofounder and Executive Director, Adventures in Social Development; Christina Smith, President/CEO, Community Support Advocates

Participants visit teaching artists and arts education organizations featured in their respective working spaces at Mainframe Studios. Through small-group conversations, teaching artist demonstrations and hands-on experiences, attendees gain a closer look at impactful arts education programs and explore ways to translate these practices into their own state or jurisdiction.

2:00 – 2:15 p.m.

Afternoon Welcome Remarks

Eric Giles, Community Learning Director, NASAA

Pam Breaux, President and CEO, NASAA (virtual)

David Schmitz, Director, Iowa Arts Council

2:15 – 4:00 p.m.

Keynote Presentation: We Build with What We Carry

Akwi Nji, Artist

Akwi Nji delivers an inspiring keynote rooted in poetry, personal narrative and reflection on creative leadership in times of transformation. Drawing from her experience as an arts leader, communications strategist and community collaborator, she invites participants to examine what it means to lead with clarity, creativity and care. Participants deepen their ability to connect storytelling with program design and explore processes that foster well-being and sustain leadership capacity.

4:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Break (snack provided)

4:15 – 4:45 p.m.

SEEDS Student Presentation and Performance

Session Facilitator: Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG; Program Officer, Arts Education & Lifelong Learning, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Dontreale Anderson, Cofounder and Executive Director, SEEDS

Through strategic partnerships including Ballet Des Moines, SEEDS cultivates the next generation of curators, artists and community leaders while affirming the significance of Black creativity in shaping culture and history. During this session, youth share how their experience with SEEDS has fostered a sense of empowerment and creative expression.

4:45 – 5:15 p.m.

Day 1 Wrap-Up

Kimberly Washburn Motte, Chair, AEWG; Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG

5:15 p.m.

Bus departs for hotel

Close of Day 1 / Dinner on your own

Wednesday, September 17

All times are Central Daylight Time.

- 8:00 a.m. Bus departs hotel for George Daily Auditorium
- Breakfast** (provided on bus)
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Arrival and Break**
- George Daily Auditorium
1800 N 3rd St #2
Oskaloosa, IA 52577*
- 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. Day 2 Welcome Remarks**
- Kimberly Washburn Motte, Chair, AEWG; Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG; Jennie Knoebel, Site Host, AEWG
- Andy McGuire, Executive Director, George Daily Auditorium
- Dave Krutzfeldt, Mayor, Oskaloosa City Council
- 10:30 – 11:25 a.m. Oskaloosa Community Panel**
- Session Facilitator:* Jennie Knoebel, Site Host, AEWG; Senior Grants and Programs Manager, Iowa Arts Council, Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Andy McGuire, Executive Director, George Daily Auditorium; Allison McGuire, Community Engagement & Education Director, George Daily Auditorium; Kristen McMains, Talent Acquisition Specialist, Musco Lighting; Deeann DeGroot, Executive Director, Mahaska Chamber & Development Group; Mike Fisher, Superintendent, Oskaloosa Community School District
- In Oskaloosa, Iowa, arts education is an integral part of the community, supported by schools, arts organizations, industry, local government and residents who recognize its value. Highlighting partnerships that leverage local assets, leaders discuss how theater education in Oskaloosa is positioned to develop transferable skills aligned with local career opportunities. Participants gain insight into how, in Oskaloosa, arts education equips young people for the future and strengthens the broader community.
- 11:25 – 11:40 a.m. Break

- 11:40 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** **Small-Group Discussions: Connect, Extend, Challenge**
- Session Facilitator:* Tamar Krames, Arts in Education Program Manager, ArtsWA
- Building on the panel discussion, participants work in small groups to explore how the strategies from Oskaloosa can be adapted to build on the unique strengths of rural communities in their own states and jurisdictions.
- 12:20 p.m. Bus departs for Downtown Oskaloosa
- 12:30 – 2:15 p.m.** **Lunch** (provided)
- Penn Central Mall
200 High Ave W
Oskaloosa, IA 52577*
- 2:15 p.m. Bus departs for George Daily Auditorium
- 2:30 – 2:45 p.m.** **Afternoon Session Welcome and Energizer**
- Jenni Ryan, Arts Education Program Specialist, Missouri Arts Council
- 2:45 – 4:15 p.m.** **Art + Community: The How Matters**
- Session Facilitator:* Matthew Anderson, Arts Education Director, North Dakota Council on the Arts
- Jennifer Drinkwater, Community Arts Specialist and Artist, Iowa State University; Brant Bollman, Artist and Puppet Maker, Uplifting Puppet Co.
- Through a guided workshop, participants explore a framework of best practices for engaging and building trust with communities of different sizes and scales through arts education programming and initiatives. Participants identify organizational and community creative assets, explore how to create effective opportunities to expand community belonging through arts education, and pinpoint granular best practices to strengthen relationships with community partners.
- 4:15 – 4:30 p.m.** **AEWG Wrap-Up**
- Kimberly Washburn Motte, Chair, AEWG; Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG; Jennie Knoebel, Site Host, AEWG

4:45 p.m.

Bus Departs for Surety Hotel

Close of Day 2 / Dinner on your own

Thursday, September 18

All times are Central Daylight Time.

8:00 a.m. Bus departs for Iowa Economic Development Authority

*Iowa Economic Development Authority
1963 Bell Ave
Des Moines, IA 50315*

8:15 – 9:30 a.m. Regional Groups Breakfast (provided)

Arts Education Working Group regional representatives lead a discussion on topics relevant to their region, orient new managers and discuss leadership succession, if applicable.

Mid-America Region: AR, KS, MO, NE, OK, TX
AEWG representative: Jenni Ryan, Missouri Arts Council

Mid Atlantic Region: DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, PR, VA, VI, WV
AEWG representative: Samanta Clarke, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Midwest Region: IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, ND, OH, SD, WI
AEWG representative: Matthew Anderson, North Dakota Council on the Arts

New England Region: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
AEWG representative: Martha Piscuskas, Maine Arts Commission

Southern Region: AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN
AEWG representative: Kimberly Washburn Motte, South Carolina Arts Commission

Western Region: AK, American Samoa, AZ, CA, CO, GU, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, Northern Marianas, OR, UT, WA, WY
AEWG representatives: Tamar Krames, ArtsWA; Danica Rosengren, Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts

9:30 – 9:45 a.m. Day 3 Welcome Remarks

Kimberly Washburn Motte, Chair, AEWG; Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG; Jennie Knoebel, Site Host, AEWG

Molly Lopez, Chief Operating Officer, Iowa Economic Development Authority

9:45 – 10:35 a.m.

Flashes of Inspiration Presentations and Panel

Session Moderator: Nancy Daugherty, Arts Education Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts

These brief presentations feature case studies of how fellow state arts agency arts education managers use their unique roles to reimagine and build enduring arts education ecosystems in their states and jurisdictions.

Kavie Barnes, Program Officer, Arts Education and Special Arts Services, New York State Council on the Arts

Explore one arts administrator's journey of telling the stories of seven community-based organizations operating across New York State through Community-Based Leaders Interviews. This brief discussion highlights the topics covered in the conversations and offers useful takeaways for arts managers who might be interested in conducting similar interviews to showcase standout organizations' impact on the field.

Matthew Boyce, Arts in Education Program Manager, Arkansas Arts Council

Arts Across Arkansas encourages, enhances and expands students' original thoughts, processes, personal experiences and artistic abilities. This presentation explores how Arts Across Arkansas gives high school students the opportunity to be rewarded for their original creative works.

Jerome Grand, Program Director, Illinois Arts Council

The Illinois Arts Council has made significant changes to its programs and operations in the past few years, starting with a NASAA study on the General Operating Support program, which guided many significant changes. The presentation is an overview of the broader changes and their impetus and the changes to arts education programs.

Reilly Jensen, Arts Education Program Manager, Utah Division of Arts & Museums

Utah's arts education team received a series of inspiring insights at the Western states gathering of arts education program managers in Washington in August. The group discussed how to shape practice, allowing time and space to align over shared values and learning experiences viewed from different state perspectives. This flash of inspiration offers a view of how Utah is

progressing arts education learning opportunities through the lens of the most recent state administrative strategic plan.

Kaci Norman, Arts in Education Program Manager, Alabama State Council on the Arts

The Alabama State Council on the Arts is launching a new student art exhibition that will present over 200 works of student art in the state capitol during the legislative session and will employ almost two dozen teaching artists. This session dives into strategies necessary to navigate needs of various stakeholders, reaching areas with limited access to the arts, and meeting tight deadlines.

Amanda Noyes, Arts Learning and Accessibility Director, South Carolina Arts Commission

Career opportunities in the arts are often underrepresented at college and career fairs, leaving students with interest in creative or artistic fields feeling left out. The South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC) is working to build Creative Careers Studio, a virtual and programmatic platform designed with both parents and students in mind, to empower youth to pursue creative fields with confidence. SCAC is developing partnerships and communication strategies to share this resource statewide.

10:35 – 10:45 a.m.

Break

10:45 – 11:15 a.m.

Prioritizing Well-Being, Health and Personal Capacity

Session Facilitator: Martha Piscuskas, Program Director, Maine Arts Commission

Akwi Nji, Artist

Building from a participatory collaborative project with Ballet Des Moines, Akwi Nji invites participants to consider the importance of personal well-being in arts education and administration. Participants identify personalized next steps to sustain their own leadership practices in their roles as arts education managers at state arts agencies.

11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Kimberly Washburn Motte, Chair, AEWG; Samantha Clarke, Cochair, AEWG; Jennie Knoebel, Site Host, AEWG

Nancy Daugherty, Arts Education Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch (provided)

12:15 p.m.

First bus returns to hotel

1:00 p.m.

Final bus returns to hotel

End of 2025 PDI