

NASAA Deputy Directors Meeting - September 17, 2025

Summary by AI and NASAA's Dora Shick based on the transcript and chat

Overview

Deputy Directors provided updates from their states, discussed current challenges and shared about their arts and health work. Natalie Petersen (Deputy Director, Utah Division of Arts & Museums) presented and led discussion on succession planning practices.

Common challenges:

- Ongoing political and funding uncertainties.
- Compliance challenges from changing federal and state restrictions.

Arts, Health and Wellness Initiatives

Many state arts agencies are using NEA funds to advance arts and health partnerships.

Examples:

- Utah: Considering conducting a statewide arts and wellness landscape assessment.
- Maryland: Partnering with Art Pharmacy for social prescribing.
- Massachusetts: Funding health centers for arts-based prescriptions.
- Indiana: Partnering with universities for creative aging research.
- Florida: Longstanding collaboration with UF's Center for Arts in Medicine.
- Colorado: Supporting statewide arts & health convening with Denver Botanic Gardens.
- Pennsylvania: Partnered with hospitals to support creative arts therapists.

States are balancing enthusiasm for arts-in-health expansion with staffing limitations.

There's interest in the upcoming convening NASAA is hosting in Washington, DC.

Succession Planning

The presentation and discussion explored how agencies prepare for leadership transitions and prevent loss of institutional knowledge. The recommended framework includes: Assessment (roles), Evaluation (gaps), and Development (training/documentation).

Common Practices:

- Creation of SOPs and desk manuals for key positions.
- Use of video recordings and cross-training to capture tacit knowledge.
- Incremental documentation strategies, such as no-meeting Fridays.
- Board engagement limited to oversight.
- Integration of succession goals into annual staff evaluations.

Most participants cited limited time as the biggest barrier, but stressed the need for transparency, communication, and shared templates across agencies.