



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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State and Local Arts Leaders Convene to Create National Arts Action Agenda

Americans for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Hold Joint Convention in Washington, DC, July 17-20

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Americans for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, two of the nation's most influential arts organizations whose members are responsible for distributing nearly two billion dollars in public funding for the arts, will convene in Washington, DC, to create a national arts action agenda. Over 1,500 arts and business leaders will attend the second joint convention, entitled pARTicipate2004, and will focus on strategies for using the arts to build communities that are vital, inclusive, and economically prosperous.

"This is the largest gathering ever, and the convention provides a rare opportunity for arts leaders to confer on crucial issues," states Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "It also provides us an opportunity to demonstrate how the arts are essential to creating vibrant communities."

Hosted by a coalition of arts organizations, featuring the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington, pARTicipate2004 will be held July 17-20 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. The National Endowment for the Arts is the lead convention sponsor, with additional sponsorship by Altria Group, Fannie Mae Foundation, the Government of the District of Columbia, and Lockheed Martin. Prominent speakers will include W. Richard West, Jr., director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian; James Carville and Mary Matalin; Dana Gioia, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts; Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts; and Jonathan Katz, CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

Says Katz, "This is the conference for all arts advocates—for everyone who understands that the transforming experience of the arts produces extraordinary public benefits—as well as for leaders in the business, government, education, and social service arenas who are finding that the arts offer powerful resources for achieving their civic and professional goals."

Prior to the conference, three preconference sessions will be held. "United Arts Funds: Meeting the Demand" will feature philanthropist Alberto Vilar; "Arts Education: Mobilizing a Commitment to Action," hosted in partnership with the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, will result in actions that attendees can take in areas such as advocacy, assessment, and professional development; and "Public Art: Civic Catalyst" will use Washington, DC, as a launching point for discussion about memorials and national monuments. Other highlights include civic engagement strategy sessions; peer-to-peer networking opportunities; "ARTventures" tours throughout the Washington, DC area, including Maryland and Virginia; special events at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Torpedo Factory Art Center, and appearances by local artists.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

Founded in 1968, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the membership organization that unites, represents, and serves the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. NASAA's mission is to advance and promote a meaningful role for the arts in the lives of individuals, families, and communities throughout the United States.

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