



Arizona Citizens for the Arts Selected for 3-Year Initiative to Advance State Arts Education Policy

Teams in 10 States Join Pilot Program to Strengthen Arts Through State Policy

Phoenix, Ariz. – August 22, 2014 – Arizona is among ten states selected to join Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education, to administer a three-year pilot program to expand policy support for local arts education and access to arts program and instruction in Arizona schools.

Lead members of the Arizona team include Catherine “Rusty” Foley, executive director of Arizona Citizens for the Arts; Lynn Tuttle, director of arts education for the Arizona Department of Education; Alexandra Nelson, director of arts learning, Arizona Commission on the Arts; and Tee Lambert, president of the Washington Elementary School District and a member of the Arizona School Board Association’s Legislative Committee.

“The link between arts education and student performance is well documented in terms of improved test scores and critical thinking. We are committed to doing all we can to build awareness of that dynamic with a collective goal to expand arts education in our schools,” Foley said. “This is a vitally important collaboration that will benefit students across Arizona to further prepare them for the workforce by enhancing and building their skills. We will support the effort in every way possible.”

Joining Arizona in the pilot program are Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Wyoming. The announcement was made at the National Conference of State Legislatures’ legislative summit in Minneapolis.

“We couldn’t be more excited to welcome the team from Arizona into our new initiative to boost arts education. Because education reforms are primarily tackled at the state and local level, this new partnership is critical to collectively strengthen the arts in education policy in our country,” said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “This cohort of ten states includes team leaders from state agencies, state legislators, advocates and the education policy community—all working together to advance policies to ensure that all America’s students can have equal access to an arts education.”

Through Americans for the Arts, the Arizona team will receive customized coaching and technical assistance throughout the three-year pilot, via web-based tools and site visits, to work towards specific objectives, resources and outcomes that they seek to impact. Additionally, the

team will receive a direct grant of \$10,000 each year of the three-year pilot program to support identified goals.

All ten state teams will convene twice per year over the three-year pilot, starting at the Americans for the Arts' State Arts Action Network's meeting in New Orleans in November, in conjunction with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies annual conference.

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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.

Arizona Citizens for the Arts, a 33-year-old 501 c3 organization, acts as the eyes, ears and voice of the nonprofit arts and culture sector in Arizona at the State Legislature, in local city halls and partnerships with business and community leaders involved in building and supporting quality of life in Arizona.

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