



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ARIZONA CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS' "VOTESmART" CAMPAIGN OFFERS UNBIASED INFO TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE VOTERS

PHOENIX, Ariz. (July 25, 2018): **VotesmART**, an Arizona Citizens for the Arts (AzCA) campaign to educate and engage voters and candidates about arts and culture issues before the upcoming local and federal elections, is underway.

Visitors to [www.azcitizensforthearts.org/vote-smart](http://www.azcitizensforthearts.org/vote-smart) will be able to register to vote, determine which district they live in and the candidates for office there, and learn about how gubernatorial and legislative candidates responded to an arts-and-culture issue survey distributed by AzCA.

"Our goal is three-fold," said Catherine "Rusty" Foley, executive director of Arizona Citizens for the Arts. "We are providing a one-stop portal for information about how to register to vote and obtain an absentee ballot, the arts and culture issues impacted by elections and how candidates feel about those issues. We're encouraging arts and culture voters to participate in their most important civic duty – voting."

AzCA distributed issue surveys to all candidates for Governor and the 90 seats in the Arizona State Legislature. Answers from candidates who responded are published on **VotesmART** and contact information for those who didn't also is listed, along with suggested questions to ask them directly about Arizona arts and culture.

"The survey does not presume any right or wrong answers," Foley said, "but tries to put arts and culture into the context of other Arizona issues and how candidates view the role arts and culture can play in improving overall quality of life in our state."

"Nonprofit arts and culture organizations represent more than a half billion dollars of economic activity statewide and help support a larger creative industries sector employing more than 90,000 men and women across Arizona," Foley said. "It is the non-profit organizations, though, that make arts and culture affordable and accessible to all citizens – representing more than 11,000 attendees annually."

“Also for example, the benefits of arts education on young people’s ability to learn, problem solve and think strategically is well-known, and Arizona’s official education policy requires arts be taught in all of our K-8 schools. Unfortunately, we know many schools are not meeting that goal. The issue for elected officials is how do we solve this problem for the benefit of all of our children,” she said.

In addition to arts and culture information, **VotesmART** also includes information about how other business, civic and community organizations view candidates and the elections. Additional information about ballot issues and other local election issues also will be added to the site before the General Election in November.

Key dates relating to upcoming elections are:

- July 30 – voter registration deadline for primary election
- August 28 – primary election
- October 9 – voter registration deadline for general election
- November 6 – general election

For more information about Arizona Citizens for the Arts, visit

[www.azcitizensforthearts.org](http://www.azcitizensforthearts.org). For more information about **VotesmART** visit <http://www.azcitizensforthearts.org/vote-smart>.

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**Arizona Citizens for the Arts**, a 37-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. For more information, visit [www.azcitizensforthearts.org](http://www.azcitizensforthearts.org) or call (602) 253-6535.

