NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

ACCESSIBILITY FACT SHEET

The Office for Accessibility is the advocacy-technical assistance arm of the National Endowment for the Arts, helping to make the arts accessible for people with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and people living in institutions.

ADVANCING LEARNING

The National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Accessibility (OA) provides technical assistance to NEA applicants, grantees, and the public to help them comply with accessibility laws and ensure access for all audiences to their arts activities.

- The OA supports NEA staff, applicants, and grantees to ensure compliance, recommending creative approaches and sharing new information on accessibility laws.
- The OA maintains an online resource area that includes regulations, guidelines, contact lists, and other tools to assist the public.
- The OA facilitates communication and holds periodic peer training sessions for 504/ accessibility coordinators at the state and regional arts organizations at both the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability conferences.
- The OA shares model programs from grantees highlighting their accessibility-focused features and the integration of artists and audiences with and without disabilities at conferences and workshops.

The National Endowment for the Arts funds projects that provide art experiences for older adults as well as professional development for those interested in working with older adults.

- In partnership with National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), the NEA developed an online directory and database of arts learning opportunities for older adults across the country.
- Also in partnership with NCCA, the NEA developed a comprehensive online training course for artists interested in working with older populations.
- Since 1990, the NEA has supported Elders Share the Arts, an award-winning community arts organization that uses art to ignite the creativity of older adults and enhance the meaning and quality of their lives.

Since 1979, the National Endowment for the Arts has supported arts programs led by professional artists for those in correctional facilities, providing access to the arts as a means of self-expression, learning, and rehabilitation.

- The NEA currently sponsors six artist residencies in federal corrections facilities.
- The NEA's programs serve as models for state and local organizations interested in doing similar work.

The OA identifies barriers for people with disabilities who are interested in pursuing careers in the arts, expanding career opportunities and encouraging diversity in the arts.

- In partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and with federal and nonprofit organizations, the NEA convened national forums on careers in the arts for individuals with disabilities in June 1998 and July 2009.
- Between 2002 and 2014, NEA funded the National Arts and Disability Center at the University of California/Los Angeles for 28 statewide forums on advancing career opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities.

The OA helps build the infrastructure, research agenda, policies, and practices around the arts and aging to demonstrate the need and value of arts experiences for, by, and with older adults.

- On May 18, 2015 the NEA and the National Center for Creative Aging co-convened the Summit on Creativity and Aging in America: A Pre-Conference to the White House Conference on Aging.
- The NEA devoted its Spring 2015 edition of the quarterly magazine, *NEA Arts*, to accessibility stories from around the country titled "Challenging Notions: Accessibility and the Arts."
- The NEA participated in White House conferences on aging in 1981, 1995, and 2005. At the 2005 summit, the late Gene Cohen presented a groundbreaking study, *Creativity and Aging Study: the Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults*, which was initiated and funded by the NEA.
- The NEA, in partnership with the National Council on Aging, founded the National Center for Creative Aging in 2000.
- The NEA funded a National Center for Creative Aging project to develop a community of practice among 38 state arts agencies to promote arts, health, and aging.

The National Endowment for the Arts is a leader and participant with other federal and nonprofit organizations in seeking solutions to challenges related to health and human development.

- In September 2012, the NEA teamed with the National Institutes of Health to sponsor a National Academies workshop titled Research Gaps and Opportunities for Exploring the Relationship of the Arts to Health and Well-Being in Older Adults. Results of this workshop were publication of a white paper, *The Arts and Aging: Building the Science* and quarterly meetings of the taskforce to investigate human development topics.
- The NEA Healing Arts Partnership explores how creative arts therapy and arts engagement programs can improve health and well-being in military healthcare settings.
- The NEA participates in the National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military led by Americans for the Arts.