



## Independent Auditor's Report

Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson  
Chair  
National Endowment for the Arts

Ronald Stith  
Inspector General  
National Endowment for the Arts

In our audits of the fiscal years 2023 and 2022 financial statements of The National Endowment for the Arts, we found:

- NEA's financial statements as of and for the fiscal years ended September 30, 2023, and 2022 are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles;
- no material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting based on the limited procedures we performed<sup>1</sup>; and
- no reportable noncompliance for fiscal year 2023 with provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements we tested.

The following sections discuss in more detail (1) our report on the financial statements, which includes required supplementary information (RSI)<sup>2</sup> and other information included with the financial statements<sup>3</sup>; (2) our report on internal control over financial reporting; (3) our report on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and (4) agency comments.

### Report on the Financial Statements

#### Opinion

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and OMB Bulletin No. 24-01, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*, we have audited NEA's financial statements. NEA's financial statements comprise the

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<sup>1</sup> A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control over financial reporting, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis.

<sup>2</sup> The RSI consists of the Management's Discussion and Analysis, which are included with the financial statements.

<sup>3</sup> Other information consists of information included with the financial statements, other than the RSI and the auditor's report.

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balance sheets as of September 30, 2023 and 2022 the related statements of net cost changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the fiscal years then ended; and the related notes to the financial statements. In our opinion, NEA's financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, NEA's financial position as of September 30, 2023 and 2022 and its net cost of operations, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the fiscal years then ended in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the U.S. and the U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of NEA and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

NEA management is responsible for

- the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles;
- preparing, measuring, and presenting the RSI in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles;
- preparing and presenting other information included in NEA's Agency financial report, and ensuring the consistency of that information with the audited financial statements and the RSI; and
- designing, implementing, and maintaining effective internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to (1) obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and (2) issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit of the financial statements conducted in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement or a material weakness when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements, including omissions, are considered to be material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements in order to obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to our audit of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of NEA's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Perform other procedures we consider necessary in the circumstances.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the financial statement audit.

#### Required Supplementary Information

U.S. generally accepted accounting principles issued by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) require that the RSI be presented to supplement the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the financial statements, is required by FASAB, which considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the financial statements in appropriate operational, economic, or historical context.

We have applied certain limited procedures to the RSI in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards. These procedures consisted of (1) inquiring of management about the methods of preparing the RSI and (2) comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to the auditor's inquiries, the financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during the audit of the financial statements, in order to report omissions or material departures from FASAB guidelines, if any, identified by these limited procedures. We did not audit, and we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI because the limited procedures we applied do not provide sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

#### Other Information

NEA's other information contains a wide range of information, some of which is not directly related to the financial statements. This information is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements or the RSI. Management is responsible for the other information included in NEA's Agency financial report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual financial report but does not include the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information, and we do not express an opinion or any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and consider whether a material inconsistency exists between the other information and the financial statements, or the other information otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work performed, we conclude that an uncorrected material misstatement of the other information exists, we are required to describe it in our report.

## **Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting**

In connection with our audits of NEA's financial statements, we considered NEA's internal control over financial reporting, consistent with our auditor's responsibilities discussed below.

### Results of Our Consideration of Internal Control over Financial Reporting

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described below and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies<sup>4</sup> or to express an opinion on the effectiveness of NEA's internal control over financial reporting. Given these limitations, during our audit, we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that have not been identified.

### Basis for Results of Our Consideration of Internal Control over Financial Reporting

We performed our procedures related to NEA's internal control over financial reporting in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards and Office of Management and Budget audit guidance<sup>5</sup>.

### Responsibilities of Management for Internal Control over Financial Reporting

NEA management is responsible for designing, implementing, and maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibilities for Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of NEA's financial statements as of and for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023, in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards, we considered NEA's internal control relevant to the financial statement audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of NEA's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on NEA's internal control over financial reporting. We are required to report all deficiencies that are considered to be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not consider all internal controls relevant to operating objectives, such as those controls relevant to preparing performance information and ensuring efficient operations.

### Definition and Inherent Limitations of Internal Control over Financial Reporting

An entity's internal control over financial reporting is a process effected by those charged with governance, management, and other personnel, the objectives of which are to provide reasonable assurance that:

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<sup>4</sup> A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over financial reporting that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

<sup>5</sup> Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 24-01, *Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements*, issued on October 19, 2023. According to the guidance, for those controls that have been suitably designed and implemented, the auditor should perform sufficient tests of such controls to conclude on whether the controls are operating effectively (i.e., sufficient tests of controls to support a low level of assessed control risk). OMB audit guidance does not require the auditor to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.

- transactions are properly recorded, processed, and summarized to permit the preparation of financial statements in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles, and assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized acquisition, use, or disposition, and
- transactions are executed in accordance with provisions of applicable laws, including those governing the use of budget authority, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements.

Because of its inherent limitations, internal control over financial reporting may not prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements due to fraud or error.

#### Intended Purpose of Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our consideration of NEA's internal control over financial reporting and the results of our procedures, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of NEA's internal control over financial reporting. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards in considering internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, this report on internal control over financial reporting is not suitable for any other purpose.

#### **Report on Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements**

In connection with our audits of NEA's financial statements, we tested compliance with selected provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements consistent with our auditor's responsibilities discussed below.

#### Results of Our Tests for Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements

Our tests for compliance with selected provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements disclosed no instances of noncompliance for fiscal year 2023 that would be reportable under U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards. However, the objective of our tests was not to provide an opinion on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to NEA. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

#### Basis for Results of Our Tests for Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements

We performed our tests of compliance in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards.

#### Responsibilities of Management for Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements

NEA management is responsible for complying with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to NEA.

#### Auditor's Responsibilities for Tests of Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements

Our responsibility is to test compliance with selected provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to NEA that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in NEA's financial statements, and to perform certain other limited procedures. Accordingly, we did not test compliance with all laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to NEA. We caution that noncompliance may occur and not be detected by these tests.

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of compliance with selected provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards in considering compliance. Accordingly, this report on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements is not suitable for any other purpose.

### **Agency Comments**

In commenting on a draft of this report, NEA management provided a written response which is presented in *Appendix I*. We did not audit NEA's response and, accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

*Williams, Adley & Company - DC, LLP*

Washington, District of Columbia  
November 14, 2023



**MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 14, 2023

To: Ron Stith, Inspector General

From: William Wiggins, Chief Financial Officer

Subject: Management’s Response to Independent Auditor’s Report for Fiscal Year 2023

We have reviewed the draft Independent Auditor’s Report on the National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) FY 2023 financial statements. We are pleased that, in Williams Adley and Company’s opinion, the NEA’s financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, NEA’s financial position as of September 30, 2023 and 2022 and its net cost of operations, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the fiscal years then ended in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

This year marks the 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive year that the NEA has received an unmodified audit opinion on its financial statements and had no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. This is no small feat and I commend my team and NEA staff accordingly for their continued commitment to maintaining and, where the opportunity presents itself, improving agency operations and internal controls.

I also would like to thank you, your staff, and Williams Adley and Company for their professionalism during this year’s audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Wiggins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*William Wiggins*  
Chief Financial Officer