



HANDBOOK FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES & REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS



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NEA Office of State & Regional Partnerships

Handbook for State Arts Agencies & Regional Arts Organizations

Welcome! This handbook is designed to provide state and regional partners with easy access to information about applying for and carrying out NEA Partnership Agreement grants. We have consolidated and expanded upon selected information from several locations on the NEA website, with the goal of addressing the questions we most frequently receive from the field. We hope that the information presented provides context and understanding for new agency staff and serves as a refresher for existing staff.

The information provided is by no means exhaustive. It is designed to highlight aspects of Partnership Agreements that are deserving of special attention. Thus, we also included links to the locations where the complete and official information resides on the NEA website.

This handbook is in the Manage Your Award / Partnership Agreement section of the NEA website, at the bottom of the page. <https://www.arts.gov/grants/manage-your-award/partnership-agreements-fy15-and-later>

In addition, the NEA Grants Office has developed its own handbook on managing an NEA grant. Although more generic than this one, it covers valuable information that you will need to understand. You may find it on the NEA website, here: <https://www.arts.gov/grants/manage-your-award/how-manage-your-nea-award-handbook>

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I. NEA PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT SUPPORT to SAAs and RAOs

Congress designates 40 percent of the NEA’s grantmaking funds for support of the 56 state and territorial arts agencies (SAAs) and the six regional arts organizations (RAOs).

NEA funds SAAs and RAOs in the form of Partnership Agreement grants, reflecting the fact that the work of the NEA and the states and regions extends beyond that of the typical grantee/grantor relationship. We also share policy priorities in areas such as arts education, reaching underserved communities, community cultural development, growth and stability of arts organizations, and increasing access to the arts for all citizens.

One of the most important requirements for SAAs and RAOs receiving NEA support is that each agency must engage constituent groups in cultural planning, and then develop a statewide or region-wide plan that responds to the priorities voiced by its constituents. This measure ensures that the NEA’s federal investment in state and regional arts agencies, through Partnership Agreement grants, supports locally-determined needs and priorities.

SAAs use NEA Partnership Agreement funds in conjunction with state government funds to carry out the goals and strategies of their publicly developed plans. RAOs, all of which are nonprofit organizations, have the flexibility to raise private funds, in conjunction with federal funds, to support their programs and initiatives.

SAAs and RAOs generally are not permitted to request support through NEA grant programs other than the Partnership Agreement, the rare exception being that RAOs are occasionally asked to serve as our partner in implementing national initiatives. SAAs and RAOs are allowed and encouraged to work in partnership with organizations applying to the NEA for direct support, but may not serve as the official NEA applicant and may not receive or use any of the funds awarded to the applicant. In addition, these grantees cannot claim SAA or RAO support (cash or in-kind) as match to their NEA award if it’s already accounted for in the Partnership Agreement budget.

II. NEA APPLICATION AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT CALENDAR

1. On-Year vs. Off-Year Application and Grant Award Cycle

SAAs and RAOs submit a full application narrative, strategic plan, and support materials every three years (see next page for schedule). They apply on a rotating basis such that only one-third of them are submitting full applications in any year. The on-year states are reviewed by a panel of experts. Three-year approval is the norm. During the two off-years, states and regions must submit an abbreviated application, which is reviewed by NEA Partnership staff.

SAA and RAO planning cycles need not synchronize with the NEA three-year application cycle. An agency’s current or future planning cycle has no bearing on application review.

NEA Partnership Agreement On-Year / Off-Year Application Cycle All agencies apply annually. Columns list the agencies due to submit on-year applications. During the two intervening years, agencies submit off-year applications.		
For the NEA 2019/2022/2025 Grant	For the NEA 2017/2020/2023 Grant	For the NEA 2018/2021/2024 Grant
Applications Due Fall 2018/2021/2024	Applications Due Fall 2016/2019/2022	Applications Due Fall 2017/2020/2023
Alaska	American Samoa	Alabama
Delaware	Arizona	Arkansas
Iowa	California	District of Columbia
Kansas	Colorado	Georgia
Minnesota	Connecticut	Guam
Missouri	Florida	Idaho
Nebraska	Hawaii	Illinois
New Jersey	Maine	Indiana
Northern Marianas	Maryland	Kentucky
Oregon	Massachusetts	Louisiana
Pennsylvania	Montana	Michigan
Rhode Island	New Hampshire	Mississippi
Texas	New Mexico	Nevada
Utah	North Carolina	New York
Vermont	North Dakota	Ohio
Washington	South Carolina	Oklahoma
West Virginia	Tennessee	Puerto Rico
Wisconsin	Virgin Islands	South Dakota
Wyoming	Virginia	Mid-America Arts Alliance
Western States Arts Federation	Arts Midwest	Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
Pacific Resources in Education & Learning		New England Foundation for the Arts
		South Arts
		National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

2. Annual Application and Grant Calendar

Application Phase 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-Year agencies submit Narrative and Plan Off-Year agencies submit Abbreviated Narrative 	Late September
Panel Review: On-Year agencies only	Mid January
National Council on the Arts recommends & NEA Chairman approves grant amounts	Late March
NEA notifies agencies of grant amounts	Early April
Application Phase 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All agencies submit Project Budgets 	Mid April
Grant Award Period: One Year	Begins July 1 or later, as requested by agency
Final Reporting	Final Reports due no later than 90 days after grant end date

3. Alignment of NEA and SAA /RAO Fiscal Years

The NEA operates on an October 1 – September 30 fiscal year. SAAs and RAOs generally operate on a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year. Most SAAs and RAOs will have moved into their next fiscal year by the time the NEA award is made in July. Example: our FY 16 grant, awarded with our FY 16 funds, in our FY 16, is received in and supports SAA/RAO FY 17 activities.

The chart on the following page provides a visual representation of the relationship between the NEA and SAA/RAO fiscal years. All actions related to a single grant are in the same color for easy tracking from Guidelines issuance to Final Report submission.

Using the NEA FY 17 grant (**Blue**) as an example:

- NEA releases FY 17 Guidelines in May 2016.
- SAA/RAO submits application in September 2016, just prior to NEA’s FY 17.
- NEA conducts State and Regional panel meeting in January 2017.
- SAA/RAO submits budget in April 2017.
- NEA issues its FY 17 Partnership awards in July 2017 for SAA/RAO FY 18 activities.
- SAA/RAO submits NEA final reports by Sept 2018 - by 90 days after the end of the grant.

During the grant period (again, using the NEA FY 17 grant as an example), agencies:

- Report on the previous NEA grant (**Purple**, NEA FY 16—SAA/RAO FY 17),
- Submit the application for the next NEA grant (**Orange**, NEA FY 18—SAA/RAO FY 19), and
- Review guidelines for the subsequent NEA grant (**Rose**, NEA FY 19—SAA/RAO FY 20).

All aspects of a single NEA grant are shaded in the same color.

*Reflects a 12 month, July 1- June 30 grant period and fiscal year. Some agencies may differ.

Calendar Year	NEA Fiscal Year	SAA/RAO Fiscal Year*	Key Action Points in Application / Grant Process	
May-16	NEA FY 16 Grant Funds	SAA/RAO FY 16	Guidelines issued for NEA FY 17 grants	
Jun-16			End date of NEA FY 15 grant that supported SAA/RAO FY 16 programs	
Jul-16		SAA/RAO FY 17	Earliest start date of NEA FY 16 grant for SAA/RAO FY 17 programs	
Aug-16			Grant period of NEA FY 16 grant	Final Reports due on NEA FY 15 grant for SAA/RAO FY 16 programs
Sep-16				Appl Part 1 due 9-30 for NEA FY17 grant for SAA/RAO FY18 programs
Oct-16	NEA FY 17 Grant Funds		SAA/RAO FY 18	Panel meeting
Nov-16		Grant period of NEA FY 17 grant		Application Part 2/Budget due-date contingent on Congress Appropriation
Dec-16				Guidelines issued for NEA FY 18 grants
Jan-17		End date of NEA FY 16 grant that supported SAA/RAO FY 17 programs		
Feb-17		Earliest start date of NEA FY 18 grant for SAA FY 19 programs		Final Reports due on NEA FY 16 grant for SAA/RAO FY 17 programs
Mar-17				Appl Part 1 due 9-30 for NEA FY 18 grant for SAA/RAO FY 19 programs
Apr-17		Grant period of NEA FY 17 grant		Panel meeting
May-17				Application Part 2/Budget due-date contingent on Congress Appropriation
Jun-17				Guidelines issued for NEA FY 20 grants
Jul-17				End date of NEA FY 18 grant that supported SAA/RAO FY 19 programs
Aug-17	NEA FY 18 Grant Funds	SAA/RAO FY19	Earliest start date of NEA FY 18 grant for SAA/RAO FY 19 programs	
Sep-17			Grant period of NEA FY 18 grant	Final Reports due on NEA FY 17 grant for SAA/RAO FY 18 programs
Oct-17				Appl Part 1 due 9-30 for NEA FY 19 grant for SAA/RAO FY 20 programs
Nov-17			Grant period of NEA FY 18 grant	Panel meeting
Dec-17				Application Part 2/Budget due-date contingent on Congress Appropriation
Jan-18				Guidelines issued for NEA FY 20 grants
Feb-18				End date of NEA FY 18 grant that supported SAA/RAO FY 19 programs
Mar-18			Earliest start date of NEA FY 18 grant for SAA/RAO FY 19 programs	Final Reports due on NEA FY 17 grant for SAA/RAO FY 18 programs
Apr-18				
May-18			Grant period of NEA FY 18 grant	Panel meeting
Jun-18	Application Part 2/Budget due-date contingent on Congress Appropriation			
Jul-18	Guidelines issued for NEA FY 20 grants			
Aug-18	End date of NEA FY 18 grant that supported SAA/RAO FY 19 programs			
Sep-18	NEA FY 19 Grant Funds	SAA/RAO FY 20	Earliest start date of NEA FY 18 grant for SAA/RAO FY 19 programs	
Oct-18			Grant period of NEA FY 18 grant	Final Reports due on NEA FY 17 grant for SAA/RAO FY 18 programs
Nov-18				Appl Part 1 due 9-30 for NEA FY 19 grant for SAA/RAO FY 20 programs
Dec-18			Grant period of NEA FY 18 grant	Panel meeting
Jan-19	Panel meeting			



III. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Application Guidelines

[Partnership Agreement Guidelines](#) are posted on the NEA website. Guidelines are generally posted in May/June in advance of the September application deadline.

SAA and RAO eligibility requirements for NEA Partnership Agreements are explained here, along with information about how to prepare and submit an application.

All applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov, the federal government's online portal for grant support. Please see #3 and #4, below, for additional explanations and guidance.

2. Application Process—Two Phases

Phase 1, Application, occurs in late September—review the [Guidelines](#) for the exact date each year.

- On-year applicants submit online application forms, the SAA/RAO strategic plan, and a narrative with links to online support materials.
- Off-year applicants submit online application forms and a one-page narrative.
- A few weeks prior to the January panel meeting, on-year applicants are offered the opportunity to e-mail a one-page update for the panel that describes any significant developments since the application was submitted.

Phase 2, Budget usually occurs in the spring, immediately following the March NEA National Council meeting when Partnership Agreements are approved. In rare instances, this will happen later in the year if the NEA has not yet received a Congressional appropriation for the current year. Absent an appropriation, we are unable to compute and convey grant amounts or request project budgets from SAAs and RAOs.

- All SAAs and RAOs submit the Project Budget Form by email, directly to the NEA, generally in mid-April.

The Project Budget Form and Instructions will be posted [here](#) following the National Council on the Arts approval of the Partnership Agreements. The Instructions have been tailored to include examples that reflect SAA and RAO situations. Please refer to them.

Important: The Budget Form should be emailed to Andi Mathis at mathisa@arts.gov per the Guidance for Recommended Applicants on the left-hand side of the Budget Form (do not send your budget to the Grants Office as noted on the right-hand side of the form).

The Phase 2 budget submission to the NEA is an estimate, as most SAAs do not yet know their appropriation for the year the grant will be supporting. We appreciate that many agencies are inclined to show significant cost sharing/match on their project budgets to demonstrate the extent to which they anticipate leveraging NEA funds. However, at this early stage, NEA requests that SAA and RAO budgets reflect no more than a one-to-one match to minimize the potential for including unallowable costs. Please note: you will be able to report actual match figures on your final report at the completion of the grant period.

SAAs and RAOs should consider carefully which grants and activities to designate as match for the NEA grant, as all recipients of funds counted as match must abide by the federal rules and regulations that govern allowable costs. We recommend that SAAs and RAOs designate the funding only to organizations that are able to ensure compliance.

3. Preparing and Submitting an Application

Partnership Agreement applications (phase 1 only) must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov, the portal for grant applications across the federal government. Phase 2 budgets are submitted via e-mail directly to the NEA.

Critical Instructions for finding the application on Grants.gov:

SAAs and RAOs **must navigate through** the [How to Prepare and Submit an Application](#) link in the [Partnership Agreement Guidelines](#) on the NEA website to reach the Partnership Agreement Funding Opportunity on the Grants.gov website. There is no visible link to the SAA/RAO Partnership Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov because the eligible applicant pool is limited.

Download the application package for the Partnership Agreement Funding Opportunity from the Grants.gov site and prepare the application according to the NEA's Partnership Agreement Guidelines.

Return to the Grants.gov website to submit the application and attachments.

Materials for Panel Review

Not all of the elements that constitute an on-year Partnership Agreement application are reviewed by panelists. The following chart indicates which materials are reviewed by the respective SAA and RAO panels (shaded area) and which materials are directed to other NEA offices or remain in the Partnership office (unshaded area).

SAAs or RAOs submitting full on-year applications need to ensure that the materials to be reviewed by the panel are complete. Narratives should not reference or rely on information in documents that do not go before the panel.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff & Board lists • Resource page (RAOs only) • Narrative with links to online support materials • Strategic Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These materials <u>are included</u> in the panel book for State and Regional Partnership Agreement panelists to review.
Poetry Out Loud Plan	Goes to Poetry Out Loud Office / Not seen by SAA Panel.
Application Form SF 424	Stays in the Partnership Office / Not seen by SAA or RAO Panels.
Optional Request for Folk Arts Partnership Support / Folk Arts Support Materials	Goes to the Folk & Traditional Arts Office for review by a separate Folk Arts Panel/ Not seen by SAA or RAO Panels.

4. DUNS and SAM

All SAAs and RAOs have completed the initial requirements for grant application submission through Grants.gov (obtaining a DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet and registering with the System for Award Management (SAM) and now are responsible for ongoing maintenance of their accounts.

- Keep track of the contact in your agency who is designated to receive Grants.gov and SAM system e-mails. We know of many cases where that individual has left the agency and important deadlines were missed because notifications were sent to an empty mailbox.
- Keep track of passwords and authorizations. We are unable to access any of the systems noted above to assist you if there is a problem.

IV. PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

1. Partnership Panelists

SAA and RAO panels consist of approximately three to five (RAO) or ten (SAA) individuals from the off-year states and regions who fulfill NEA requirements for discipline expertise, as well as ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity.

We ensure that the majority of panelists are from the SAA and RAO fields—or have deep knowledge of the work of SAAs or RAOs—and represent a mix of leadership perspectives including directors and deputy directors, council members and chairs, and cultural cabinet / department heads.

We also include knowledgeable professionals from outside the state and regional sphere who provide valuable perspective to the review process. In recent years, we have included foundation leaders, education leaders, community development leaders, and public sector officials on State and Regional panels. We also seek up-and-coming leaders in the field who will be able to contribute fresh and valuable perspectives to the panel discussion.

For the RAO panels, we ensure that the panel includes individuals with expertise in the touring and presenting fields.

2. Application Review / Review Criteria

The Partnership Agreement review process is designed to provide panelists with a holistic view of state and regional arts agency operations. SAAs and RAOs are assessed in relation to the same review criteria: Quality of Planning Process, Quality of Plan, and Quality of Plan Implementation. The following chart shows how the criteria are applied.

Review Criteria	SAAs	RAOs
Quality of Planning Process	<p>Panelists will review all aspects of an SAA’s planning process including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to engage all appropriate constituencies through an inclusive planning process. • Efforts to identify constituent needs and opportunities in designing and developing the plan. • Efforts to employ a variety of strategies to include the perspectives of all constituencies. 	<p>Panelists will review all aspects of an RAO’s planning process including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to identify constituent needs and opportunities through an inclusive planning process that involves member state agencies, touring and other artists, presenters, supporters, and other constituents, including those in underserved communities. • Efforts to be responsive to priorities that member state arts agencies identify.
Quality of Plan	<p>Panelists will review all aspects of an agency’s plan including: vision, mission, appropriateness of the goals and strategies, evaluation plans, adaptability, centrality of the arts, and clarity of the plan document.</p>	<p>Panelists will review all aspects of an agency’s plan including: vision, mission, appropriateness of the goals and strategies, evaluation plans, adaptability, centrality of the arts, and clarity of the plan document.</p>

Review Criteria	SAAs	RAOs
Quality of Plan Implementation	<p>Panelists will review all aspects of an SAA's execution of its plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency programs, collaborations, leadership, and other accomplishments and the impact on the SAA, its partners, and constituents. • Potential to achieve results addressing state and NEA priorities. 	<p>Panelists will review all aspects of an RAO's execution of its plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization programs, collaborations, leadership, and other accomplishments and the impact on the RAO, its partners, and constituents. • Potential to achieve results addressing regional and NEA priorities. • Cost effectiveness of the operation. • Evidence of success and the potential for success in developing an appropriate non-federal revenue base.
Areas of Special Interest	<p>Panelists will also evaluate SAA work in the areas of arts education and reaching underserved communities. NEA designates funding for these areas for which we must be accountable.</p>	<p>Panelists will also consider RAO strategies for ensuring that an appropriate proportion of regional touring activity takes place in underserved communities.</p>

3. Open Review

SAA panel meetings are conducted via online video conference and RAO panel meetings are conducted via teleconference. Partnership panels are currently the only NEA grant panels that are open to the public. We strive to make the reviews accessible in a variety of ways:

- The SAA panel meeting is open to observers who want to log-in and watch the proceedings online.
- We make the video recordings available to the respective applicants following the meeting. They are also archived on the NEA website.
- We maintain an open phone line during the RAO meeting, and make the phone recordings available to the respective applicants following the meeting.

Over the years, the SAA and RAO field has found the Partnership Agreement panels to be a valuable professional development opportunity. Thus, in addition to observers from the agencies undergoing review, we often have observers from agencies not due to submit an on-year application until the following year or two. Observers learn how applications are analyzed and critiqued so that they may prepare a more thorough and responsive application when it is their turn.

V. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT GRANTS

1. Composition of a Partnership Agreement Award / Grant Amounts

SAA and RAO Partnership Agreement grants include general Partnership funds, which are undesignated, and may be used for any allowable and approved purpose that will help carry out SAA/RAO plans.

In addition, SAA grants include designated funds for arts education, underserved communities, and Poetry Out Loud. RAO grants include designated funds for presenting and touring. SAAs and RAOs may request optional support for Folk Arts Partnership activities. If awarded, those funds will be identified in the Partnership Agreement award documents. The designated amounts indicate the minimum that must be invested in these areas of interest.

Each of the Partnership funding streams has its own formula for the distribution of NEA funds. The majority of the SAA award and all of the RAO award is formulaically derived (base amounts, equal allocations, population factors). Some competitive funding is applicable to the SAAs in the areas of arts education and service to underserved communities as recommended through panel review of on-year applications. For both SAAs and RAOs, the optional Folk Arts Partnership support is entirely competitive and is determined through a panel review process conducted by the NEA Folk and Traditional Arts program office.

Beginning in NEA FY 17, and going forward, on-year SAAs and RAOs who apply and are recommended for Folk Arts Partnership support, will receive an equal level of support each year for their three-year cycle, subject to changes in NEA's appropriation or substantive changes in the SAA/RAO program.

2. Designated Funding / Matching

SAAs and RAOs must match the bottom line amount of the Partnership Agreement, irrespective of the amounts designated for the individual grant components (Plan, AIE, Underserved, Folk, POL, Touring). Older grants prior to 2012 that are still open are governed by component-by-component matching requirements that were applicable to that particular fiscal year.

3. When SAA and RAO Plans Include Activities the NEA Doesn't Support

Partnership Agreement grants, which comprise NEA funds and the state/regional matching funds included in the project budget, may not be used to support unallowable expenses as defined in [2 CFR 200 \(Uniform Guidance\)](#). Some examples include receptions, lobbying, servicing debt, home offices, and alcohol. A change made in the Uniform Guidance that benefits our constituencies is that the cost of some types of fundraising is now allowable. The cost must be specific to the project being funded, and most likely might be the percentage of development/fundraising staff. Costs associated with overall organizational fundraising are not allowable, nor are receptions, galas or openings, even if the funds raised are for the federal project.

There are some costs that may be allowable for federal awards that the NEA, per agency legislation or policy, generally does not fund. In some cases, if these activities are included in your strategic plan, you may include their costs in your Partnership Agreement budget. However, there are additional requirements related to these costs. For example:

- Construction and renovation projects—e.g., accessibility-related construction and renovation, substantial exhibition design and the installation of climate control systems for a museum, etc. These construction-type projects that involve labor must comply with the provisions of the [Davis-Bacon Act](#).
- Support to individual artists is allowable only if the award funds programs and activities and is not a one-time monetary recognition award. Awards to individuals should include requirements for presentations to the public, training, research, or creation of an artwork. The award is considered a stipend to the artist for the work undertaken and completed. Because neither the NEA Partnership Agreement funds nor the matching funds can support a fellowship based on the artist's past body of work (also known as "buy time" or "honorific" awards), costs for this type of award must not be included in the Partnership Agreement budget and cannot be funded with NEA funds or your agency's match to the NEA funds.

We often receive questions about whether SAAs or RAOs are allowed to support organizations that do not have IRS 501c3 status but are registered with the state as nonprofit entities. This is especially true for the smallest of organizations.

- Any nonprofit organization funded directly by the NEA must have 501c3 status. SAA and RAO organizational grantees that are funded through the Partnership Agreement (i.e., the NEA funds and the SAA or RAO match) also must have 501c3 status.

- SAA/RAO support for nonprofits that do not have 501c3 status would have to fall outside the NEA Partnership Agreement grant budget. Depending on your own legislation and policies, SAAs and RAOs could support these organizations with funds that are not included as matching funds in the Partnership Agreement budget.

VI. MANAGING THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT GRANT

1. Overview of Award Management

The [Manage Your Award](#) section of the NEA website covers all aspects of Partnership Agreement award management. Information about final reporting, accessibility requirements, how to request grant payments, compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), NEA crediting requirements, budget amendments, and records retention, among other topics, is included here.

Please take special note of the [General Terms and Conditions](#) document. It provides information about the rules and regulations that govern Partnership Agreements and references the Uniform Guidance, and other National and Legal Policies where the requirements originate. The document also includes information on requirements that apply to SAA and RAO grantees. Consider this the "go to" resource when there are questions about allowability of expenses or actions under the Partnership Agreement grant.

In items #2-7, below, and in the Final Reporting section, this handbook highlights and expands upon several of the more complex aspects of award management. Please be sure to study the entire [Manage Your Award](#) section on the NEA website for all applicable grant requirements.

2. Personnel Activity Reports & Allocating Staff Time to the Grant

Agencies are no longer required to complete Personnel Activity Reports for staff members whose time is allocated partially or fully to the Partnership Agreement grant. However the ability to provide appropriate documentation for allocating actual staff time to a federal award is still necessary. The NEA still provides examples of such report formats on the website:

- [Sample Personnel Activity Form](#)
- [Sample Hourly Personnel Activity Form](#)

When allocating a staff member's time to the Partnership grant, please consider the following:

- 100 percent of a staff member's time may be allocated to the Partnership grant if the individual's activities are fully aligned with carrying out the agency's NEA-approved strategic plan.

However, additional factors, such as the ones listed below, must be considered first:

- If 100 percent of a staff member's time is allocated to the Partnership grant, then that individual cannot claim costs for anything outside the scope of the Partnership Agreement (defined as the NEA funds and the SAA or RAO matching funds identified in the project budget). Examples of work outside the scope of the grant might include special initiatives or partnerships that were not included as match to the NEA funds in the project budget, or work for other federal awards your agency may receive.
- If an individual's time is allocated 100 percent to two successive Partnership grants, and an extension is received on the earlier grant such that the periods of both grants run concurrently for any length of time, the SAA/RAO must stop charging the salary/benefits to the first grant at the end of the original period of support. This will avoid "overlapping project costs," i.e., two federal grants supporting the same expenses, which is prohibited.
- Be mindful that partner organizations with which SAA/RAOs are working on a particular project may claim SAA or RAO staff time on their own grants from other funders. Including the same staff time on the NEA grant also would result in overlapping project costs, which are prohibited.
- If a staff member's responsibilities include activities that are unallowable by the NEA, even if they are allowable in a particular state—advocacy might be an example—then the time associated with those activities cannot be allocated to the grant.

3. Amendments

It is possible to amend the Partnership Agreement budget and request scope adjustments or time extensions in response to changes in agency priorities and activities. Time extensions are covered in detail in [Section VII, Final Reporting](#). See the [General Terms and Conditions](#) for additional information.

4. Crediting

The NEA provides print, audio, and website crediting and logo guidance along with model language for SAAs and RAOs:

- to credit the NEA on their own projects and initiatives, and
- to provide to grantees that are receiving NEA funds indirectly through a grant from the SAA/RAO.

Specific guidance may be found on our website:

- [crediting language](#)
- [logo guidance](#)

5. DUNS Numbers for SAA and RAO Grantees / Federal Subrecipient Reporting System

Since 2011, all organizations funded by SAAs and RAOs as part of the NEA Partnership Agreement (i.e., with NEA funds or the match for the NEA funds) must have Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) numbers.

It may be more efficient for SAAs and RAOs to collect this information at the application stage rather than at the grantmaking stage. However, that is each agency's decision to make independently.

SAAs and RAOs are required to report through the Federal Subrecipient Reporting System (FSRS) on awards made with \$25,000 or more in federal funds, in compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (aka, the "Transparency Act"). The DUNS number of the grantee is required for this process.

Please see <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/FFATA-FAQ-revised-8-14.pdf> for more information on the FSRS requirement.

6. Drawing Down Grant Funds

Agencies may request funds in advance or as a reimbursement, using the [Request for Advance or Reimbursement form](#). Advances may be requested only for expenses to be incurred within 30 days or less of signing/submitting the request. If you have questions regarding this, please contact the Grants & Contracts Office (202-682-5403).

Detailed instructions are here: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/payment-request-instructions-jan2016.pdf>

Online Video Tutorial is here: <http://arts.gov/video/requesting-payment>

7. Managing Poetry Out Loud

[Poetry Out Loud](#) (POL) is an NEA / Poetry Foundation national initiative that is carried out at the state level by SAAs. Through the Partnership Agreement grant, the NEA provides special support to SAAs for this purpose that is over and above the Congressionally-mandated Partnership funding.

SAA's are responsible for:

- Recruiting schools to implement the Poetry Out Loud curriculum in the classroom,
- Conducting regional and/or a state-level Poetry Out Loud recitation contest to identify a state champion,
- Providing information on the lead contact at each participating school, and
- Completing the Poetry Out Loud Final Report.

SAA's are encouraged to manage POL in a way that is appropriate for their agency's circumstances. Some have in-house staff who manage all aspects of the program. Other SAA's work with a partner organization that coordinates the program on their behalf through a grant or contract, while still others contract with an individual to coordinate the program.

Please find more information about POL on our website:

<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/pol-information-sheet-may2015.pdf>

8. Accessibility Legal Requirements

Per the NEA's [General Terms and Conditions for Grantees and Cooperators](#), state arts agencies must execute their projects (e.g., productions, workshops, programs, etc.) in accordance with the following laws, where applicable:

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. (29 U.S.C. 794)
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I), state and local government services (Title II), places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities (Title III). (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213)

The requirements under Section 504 and ADA are similar; however, Section 504 requirements apply only to recipients of federal funds.

More information is available through our [Office of Civil Rights](#) and in the Assurance of Compliance section of the Partnership Agreement [Guidelines](#).

SAA's and RAO's must:

- Complete a [Section 504 Self-Evaluation](#) and keep it on file. You are not required to use the NEA's workbook, but it's available for use.

- Inform SAA/RAO grantees that they are receiving federal funds from the NEA and they also must comply with these mandates and have a Section 504 Self-Evaluation on file.
- Appoint a staff member to serve as accessibility coordinator to help lead the organization and its constituents in complying with the ADA and Section 504.

More information on the responsibilities of this position can be found here:

<http://nwadacenter.org/toolkit/ada-coordinators-role>

<https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/toolkitmain.htm>

<https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap2toolkit.htm>

- Provide information on SAA/RAO websites stating accessibility policies and contact information for requesting accommodations or making inquiries.
- Publicize the name of the accessibility coordinator as the official accessibility contact.
- Establish a grievance procedure for responding to public complaints.

NEA Office of Accessibility:

The NEA [Office of Accessibility](#) maintains a public listing of all [SAA and RAO accessibility coordinators](#) on the NEA’s website. This office regularly communicates with the SAA and RAO accessibility coordinators and provides information regarding accessibility-related laws, regulations, training opportunities, and resources. The office also serves as a technical assistance resource to the SAAs and RAOs on accessibility compliance.

For more information, contact:

- Accessibility Director Beth Bienvenu at (202) 682-5567 or bienvenub@arts.gov
- Accessibility Specialist Lauren Tuzzolino at (202) 682-5748 or tuzzolinol@arts.gov

VII. FINAL REPORTING

Final reporting is a significant aspect of managing a Partnership Agreement. The NEA’s website provides detailed information and guidance on reporting, which may be found here:

- For FY 14 and earlier awards:
 - <https://www.arts.gov/grants/manage-your-award/fy14-and-earlier-partnership-agreements> scroll down to “Partnership Agreements”
- For FY 15 and later awards:
 - <https://www.arts.gov/grants/manage-your-award/fy15-and-later> scroll down to “Partnership Agreements”

Important Changes:

- Interim reports are no longer required, as of April 20, 2015.
- The Totals Page has been eliminated from the Final Descriptive Report (FDR) beginning with reports on the NEA FY 15 award.

For additional information on match and allowable costs, see the discussions in this Handbook:

- [Section V.2 Designated Funding/Matching](#), and
- [Section III.2 Application Process—Two Phases](#).

A. FINAL REPORT CONTENT

A final report to the NEA consists of two parts, each of which is described below.

1. The Federal Financial Report (FFR)

The [FFR](#) is a one-page form that captures allowable expenditures under the Partnership Agreement, including NEA funds and all allowable match. The NEA’s Grants and Contracts office uses this form to verify that SAAs and RAOs have received and spent all NEA funds and have met the required 1 to 1 match.

2. The Final Descriptive Report (FDR)

The FDR is the document that “tells the story” of your work with and for your constituents. It captures information on **all** activities (i.e., grants, programmatic activities, related administrative and personnel expenses) conducted under the State Arts Plan or Regional Arts Plan that was approved as part of your NEA Partnership application and that took place within the official grant period.

If an SAA or RAO makes grants or supports activities that are allowable in their state or region but not by the NEA, those grants and activities now may be included in the FDR, but they may not be designated as match for the NEA funds as matching funds must be for NEA-allowable costs that are compliant with the Partnership Agreement terms and conditions.

This enables SAAs and RAOs to report on the entirety of their operations on the FDR to provide a clear and compelling demonstration of their work. We encourage SAAs and RAOs to take advantage of this opportunity as FDR reporting “feeds” the NEA’s database of SAA/RAO support, thus leading to a fuller and more realistic picture of SAA and RAO support for use in policy development and research efforts.

Within the FDR, SAAs and RAOs report:

- Basic information about grantees, including name; address; whether the entity is a nonprofit, an individual, or a unit of local government; etc.
- Information about funded projects, including the activity that was funded, the artistic discipline, etc.
- Financial information, including amount requested, amount ultimately awarded, and the total amount of NEA funds and all allowable match.
- Narrative information is required for the optional Folk Arts support. Grants prior to NEA FY 10 have varying narrative requirements. Review the reporting requirements at <https://www.arts.gov/grants/manage-your-award>.

SAA and RAO FDRs must use the codes associated with the National Standard for Arts Information Exchange (the National Standard). This way, no matter how an agency structures its grant programs internally, the information reported to the NEA is comparable and can be aggregated for national analysis.

3. National Standard Technical Assistance

NEA engages NASAA, through a cooperative agreement, to provide technical assistance and training to SAAs and RAOs on the National Standard and to maintain for the NEA the national database of state and regional grantmaking information.

NASAA devotes a section of its website to National Standard training and technical assistance for SAAs and RAOs at: <http://www.naSAA/RAO-arts.org/Research/Planning-and-Accountability/National-Standard-Reference-Center/>

B. MECHANICS of NEA GRANT REPORTING

1. Due Date

Final reports are due in the NEA Grants Office no later than 90 days after the end date of the grant period. The 90-day period allows for obligation and liquidation of committed funds (every agency has different terms for this process) and final report preparation.

When submitting NEA final reports, SAAs and RAOs also must submit copies of their FDRs (not FFRs) to NASAA for inclusion in the NEA's national database of state and regional grantmaking.

2. Extensions on Grant Periods and Extensions on Reporting

Funds are meant to be used during the year of the grant period to carry out the state or regional plan.

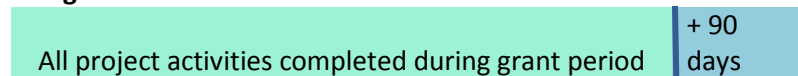
If projected SAA or RAO activities, or activities of their grantees—supported by NEA funds and/or SAA or RAO matching funds—are not completed by the end date of the grant, then an **extension to extend the grant period must be requested** to keep the grant open until activities are completed.

It is not appropriate to request an extension to "roll over" unused funds for future-year activities or to otherwise reallocate grant funds or the required match to support programs that were not anticipated during the original period of support. If a grant is approved for an extension, Partnership funds must “tie back” to programs or activities that carry out the state or regional plan associated with the original start and end dates of the grant period.

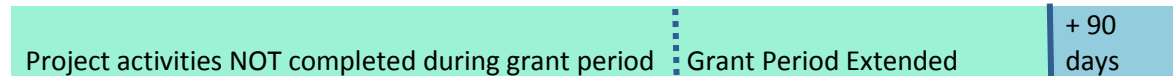
Occasionally, an agency and its grantees will have completed all project activities within the specified grant period, but the agency is unable to prepare and submit final reports by the required due date. In those instances, the agency must request an **extension for filing the final report**.

Final Report Extension Examples:

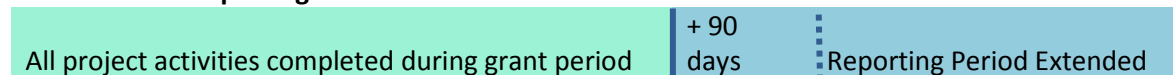
Original Grant:



Grant Period Extension:



Extension on Reporting:



To request an extension, send an email to grants@arts.gov with a cc: to mathisa@arts.gov that includes:

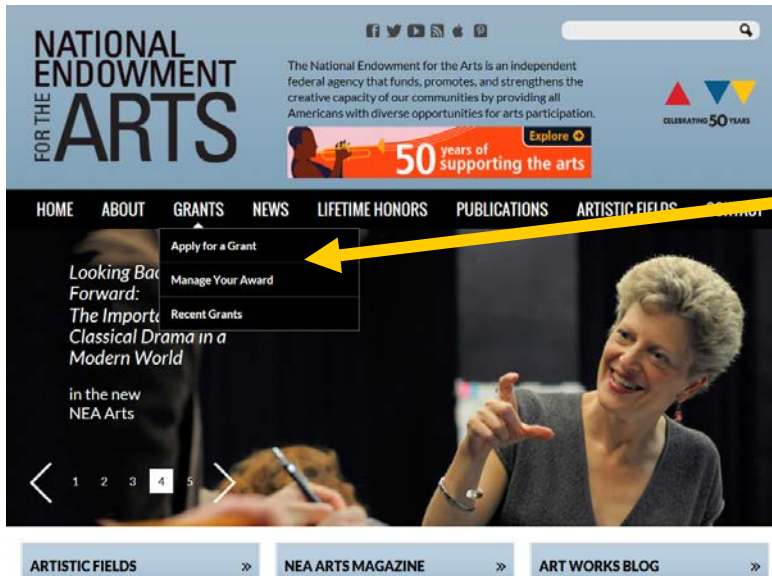
- Name of your agency
- Grant number
- Type of extension requested (grant period or reporting) and brief justification
- Proposed new end-date for the grant period or proposed new reporting date

Do not assume an extension has been approved until an official notification is received from NEA’s Grants & Contracts Office.

VIII NAVIGATING the NEA WEBSITE

1. How to Find Partnership Application and Reporting Information

Throughout this document, we have included direct links to specific pages of the NEA website so that SAAs/RAOs can reach the information needed for applying for and reporting on Partnership Agreements. We also want to demonstrate how to navigate logically to this information from the home page of the NEA website at www.arts.gov:



- Select the **GRANTS** option on the top menu bar of the home page. Three paths will be possible:

<p>For Application information, select:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Apply for a grant</u> <p>then select</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>State & Regional</u> 	<p>For information on Managing or Reporting on a grant, select :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Manage your award</u> <p>then select</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>FY 14 and Earlier, or</u> ➤ <u>FY 15 and Later</u> <p>Then select</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Partnership Agreements</u> 	<p>For Lists of Recently Awarded Grants by year, state, or discipline select:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Recent grants</u>
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2. How to Find Information on SAA/RAO Partnership Agreements and other NEA Awards

The My Grant at a Glance tool at www.arts.gov/mygrant provides extensive history and status information on NEA grants.

- Enter a grant number to see start and end dates of a particular SAA or RAO grant, the project description, when reports are due, if they've been received, how much money has been drawn down, etc.
- Once information on a single grant has been retrieved, it is possible to retrieve a history of all of the grantee's grants dating back to the late-1980s.

The GrantSearch tool at <https://apps.nea.gov/grantsearch/> is a database of all NEA awards back to the late-1980s that may be searched by year, by geography, by NEA program, by key word, etc. It provides information on the grantee, the project description, and the award amount.

3. NEA Legislation

<http://www.arts.gov/about/Legislation/Legislation.html>

4. NEA History

<http://arts.gov/about/national-council-arts>

5. NEA 50th Anniversary

<https://www.arts.gov/50th>

- SAA/RAO Videos: <https://www.arts.gov/50th/stories>
- NEA Fact Sheets: <https://www.arts.gov/50th/facts-and-figures>

6. NEA Budget History

<http://www.arts.gov/about/Budget/AppropriationsHistory.html>

7. NEA Discipline Director Biographies

<http://www.arts.gov/about/Directors/index.html>

8. NEA Staff Contact Information

<http://www.arts.gov/staff/staff.html>

9. About the NEA

<http://www.arts.gov/about/index.html>

10. NEA on Social Media

Find us on:    

11. NEA Art Works Blog

<https://www.arts.gov/art-works>