

## INTRO

In a democracy, advocates can and should "take the law into their own hands" through legislative activism. By advocating for the arts at the local, state, and national levels, you can help encourage funding for and investment in the arts and help pass arts-friendly legislation. While the prospect of lobbying legislators or proposing laws may seem daunting, it's really a pretty simple process. Advocacy is really just speaking up for a cause that you believe in.

Advocacy isn't hard or complicated, anyone can do it, and it should be a daily activity for everyone concerned with the arts and with community issues. Keeping your lawmakers informed about your concerns through personal visits is the most effective way to be heard, but there are dozens of ways to connect with and advocate to your elected officials, from simple things like sending an e-mail to more elaborate strategies such as inviting elected officials to a performance or exhibition.

**Remember—it's the duty of every citizen to make his/her voice heard, and it's a lawmaker's job to listen to and serve the concerns of his or her constituents.** Your goal is to build and sustain a relationship with your elected official for the long-term—true, effective advocacy takes time!

## HOW TO GET STARTED (It's easy!)

### NATIONAL LEVEL

- a. Americans for the Arts makes it easy by putting everything you'll need right at your fingertips: [http://www.artsusa.org/get\\_involved/advocate.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocate.asp)
- b. Get to know your Americans for the Arts state and/or district advocacy captain: [http://www.artsusa.org/get\\_involved/advocacy/advocacy\\_005.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocacy/advocacy_005.asp)

### STATE LEVEL

- a. Ask your state and/or arts advocacy captain how you can get involved in speaking up for the arts in your community. To find your state captain, visit [http://www.artsusa.org/get\\_involved/advocacy/advocacy\\_005.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocacy/advocacy_005.asp).
- b. 26 states use CapWiz, a Web portal that employs state-of-the-art technology to keep you up-to-date on the latest information and make it easy to communicate with elected officials in an effective and timely manner. The State Arts Action Network of Americans for the Arts is comprised of statewide arts advocacy and service organizations that partner with Americans for the Arts to make CapWiz available in their states, and provide service, advocacy and development on statewide issues in their respective states. Getting involved with your statewide arts advocacy organization is a great way to be involved in local and state issues, and connect to national issues through the partnership with Americans for the Arts.

**To find out if your state has a statewide organization,** go to

[http://www.americansforthearts.org/get\\_involved/advocacy/saan/default.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/get_involved/advocacy/saan/default.asp).

**To find out if your state uses Capwiz, and to sign on to the service,** type in [www.capwiz.com/artsusa/](http://www.capwiz.com/artsusa/)(two letter abbreviation of your state). For example, Massachusetts's CapWiz site is [www.capwiz.com/artsusa/MA](http://www.capwiz.com/artsusa/MA).

## LOCAL LEVEL

- a. Do the homework to find out if a local or regional network of advocates exists in your area. Your state arts council will have that information.
- b. Find out how your local government works. Learn who the decision-makers are that influence the arts and arts education policy. Your local League of Women Voters will be able to provide that information.
- c. Read “How to Talk with Your Elected Officials” in Americans for the Arts tool kit and then start to build a relationship with them.
- d. To take it one step further, have a representative of your Emerging Leaders Network act as liaison with Americans for the Arts to inform the national organization about pending local or regional issues. Capwiz now has the technology to post local alerts and direct e-mail to city councils and mayors. Americans for the Arts is happy to work with emerging leaders on advancing local arts issues. Contact Director of State and Local Government Affairs at Americans for the Arts Jay Dick at [jay@artsusa.org](mailto:jay@artsusa.org)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & IMPORTANT WEBSITES

Americans for the Arts **Advocacy Page**—[www.AmericansForTheArts.org/advocacy](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/advocacy)

Americans for the Arts **E-Advocacy Center**—[www.capwiz.com/artsusa](http://www.capwiz.com/artsusa)

Americans for the Arts **Advocacy PowerPoint Presentations**—[http://www.artsusa.org/get\\_involved/advocacy/advocacy\\_018.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocacy/advocacy_018.asp) (presentations are in pdf format—for PowerPoint versions, please contact Government Affairs and Grassroots Coordinator at Americans for the Arts).

Americans for the Arts **Creative Industries** reports, updated annually—[http://www.artsusa.org/information\\_resources/research\\_information/services/creative\\_industries/state\\_legislative\\_districts/default.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/information_resources/research_information/services/creative_industries/state_legislative_districts/default.asp)

**Arts and Economic Prosperity III**—Americans for the Arts’ June 2007 study on the economic power of the nation’s nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences  
[http://www.americansforthearts.org/information\\_resources/research\\_information/services/economic\\_impact/default.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_resources/research_information/services/economic_impact/default.asp)

Americans for the Arts’ **State Arts Action Network**—[http://www.americansforthearts.org/get\\_involved/advocacy/saan/default.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/get_involved/advocacy/saan/default.asp).

Election Information—[www.capwiz.com/artsusa/e4](http://www.capwiz.com/artsusa/e4)

U.S. House of Representatives (Schedules, pending legislation, etc)—[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

U.S. Senate—[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

Congress’ Legislative Website, with full text of all bills and reports—[thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov)

National Endowment for the Arts—[www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)

Guide to the U.S. Department of Education’s Arts in Education programs—<http://www.ed.gov/programs/gtep/index.html>