



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Two Previously Independent National Arts Organizations Become Part of Americans for the Arts

Join Forces To Enhance The Collective Impact Of Arts Advocacy

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Americans for the Arts, the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, announced today that two previously independent national arts organizations, the State Arts Advocacy League of America (SAALA) and the National Community Arts Network (NCAN), have ratified an agreement to become part of Americans for the Arts. The ratifications took place at meetings of the Boards of Directors of the two organizations in Washington, DC, yesterday.

The State Arts Advocacy League of America is the national organization representing state arts advocacy organizations dedicated to increasing state public funding for the arts. Its current leadership brings a combined 189 years of experience in arts advocacy and has provided invaluable networking and educational opportunities to arts leaders.

The National Community Arts Network is the national organization representing statewide organizations dedicated to community arts development. Formerly known as the United Statewide Community Arts Association, it brings a legacy of 36 years of professional statewide service and advocacy to the community arts field.

Both SAALA and NCAN will be incorporated into Americans for the Arts as a newly formed State Arts Action Council and Network. Under the new Council and Network, one committee will be dedicated to advocacy issues and another will be devoted to leadership development and service issues. Both organizations previously were staffed by volunteer board members, and their headquarters have corresponded with each organization's chair. Americans for the Arts will now support and assume administrative and programmatic responsibilities for the Council and Network, which will be housed and staffed at the offices of Americans for the Arts in Washington, DC.

"We are very pleased to have these two outstanding organizations join with Americans for the Arts," said Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "The impact of arts

advocacy can be strengthened by collective action, and I look forward to working in unison on our many efforts to enhance all of America's communities through the arts."

"SAALA brings a distinguished history of shared resources and networking by statewide arts advocacy organizations to this promising new consolidation with Americans for the Arts and NCAN. We look forward to working together to expand and deepen arts advocacy in every state," said Alene Valkanas, SAALA Chair and Executive Director of the Illinois Arts Alliance.

Betty Plumb, Chair of NCAN and Executive Director of the South Carolina Arts Alliance, added: "Although the idea to bring together these two dynamic organizations has germinated for some time, Americans for the Arts' timely proposal to become a joint council was the catalyst for real change and the opportunity to address an ambitious national agenda where we will all benefit."

The joining together of these two organizations with Americans for the Arts is consistent with the bold five-year strategic plan recently developed by Americans for the Arts as a result of a \$120 million gift from philanthropist Ruth Lilly. In that plan, created through a year-long planning process, Americans for the Arts identified the need for creating a statewide advocacy organization and a statewide service organization in every state. The State Arts Action Council and Network will strengthen and build arts advocacy and service infrastructure in the United States at the national, state, and local levels. Among other things, it will help shape public policy, initiate effective advocacy campaigns, set research agendas, provide meaningful professional development, and provide peer-to-peer networking opportunities to emerging arts organizations.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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