

Checklist to Support the Arts in PA

June 2009

OVERVIEW

The current state budget negotiations for FY2009-2010:

- \$3.2 billion shortfall,
- PA constitution requires a balanced budget,
- Governor proposed \$14 million for grants to the arts (an 8% decrease from current year) and the House Appropriations Committee included that level in their budget bill which is currently being considered before a full vote on the House floor.

TIMELINE

With the understanding that there is no official timeline for the budget process – other than the current fiscal year ends June 30, no spending can occur for next fiscal year until new budget and revenue bills are signed by the Governor.

- The House budget bill must be voted on by the full House of Representatives. That could take place any day;
- If the bill passed by the House differs from the bill passed by the Senate (which is certain to happen), the budget goes to conference committee (composed of representatives of leadership from both caucuses – Democrat and Republican, from both the House and the Senate – four caucuses total).
- Both the Senate and the House will need to approve a compromise budget to send to the Governor.
- The Governor has line item veto but cannot add anything to the compromise budget that comes from conference committee;
- The timing will likely be affected by cut-off date in the 1st week of July, after that date state employees work without pay, which puts pressure on both Legislature and Administration to finalize a budget (unlike the Federal government, there is no option of a continuing resolution).
- It is an election year, so this also adds incentive to settle the budget on time.

CALL TO ACTION

What you can do to help by making your voice known as the budget is finalized (there is a short timeline, so please act quickly):

Task	Date Completed	Notes
Send letters to your legislators from every member of the board, staff, contractors (artists and others), vendors (supplies, ad agency, media outlets where purchased advertising, food vendors, etc.) volunteers and their families and friends urging support for state arts grants at \$14 million and full funding for the PCA. (Alert them that they may need to email or write again as we get closer to a final budget).		
IMPORTANT: email NTCA or Citizens for the Arts with updates on your contacts and advocacy activities , including who contacted which legislators		
Sign up with Citizens for the Arts in PA for action alerts (promote use of their automated communications, Capwiz, to contact legislators).		
Go to your legislators' website and sign up for the newsletters and email alerts so you know what they are saying about the budget. For the future, consider asking them to promote your organization in future newsletters or ask them to link to your website in their eNewsletters.		
Ask people to use any Social Media outlets they have access to : Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogs, online petitions.		
Make an in-person visit to your legislators' district offices – take someone you know the legislator will know, recognize, listen to, or bring an eloquent student, parent, audience member, who benefits from your events and activities. If the legislator is not available, go see the staff. Stage a mini-performance (arrange this in advance). Leave behind a piece of children's art, a music CD, or a DVD and a schedule of your events. (Invite Legislative staff to come for free).		
Inform your audiences, vendors, local elected officials, and ask them to <u>take immediate action</u> to urge their legislators to support arts funding and the PCA in the state budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Take advantage of upcoming events in June to spread the word (Invite Legislators and their staff);○ Make curtain speeches or welcoming remarks at exhibit openings;○ Use your email lists and listservs;		

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Distribute advocacy sign up information for Citizens for the Arts;○ Add an alert on your website, in your email signatures at work and at home (and those of your board and staff, family and friends), and on emailed event notices;○ Reach out to your media/press contacts, write or arrange for letters to the editor/op-eds about the benefits of what you do for your community and the importance of state funding. | | |
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