

Performing Arts Alliance  
Strategic Plan  
(as of December 2016)

I. Background and Context

A. Who We Are

Founded in 1977, the Performing Arts Alliance (PAA) is the premiere advocate for America's professional nonprofit arts organizations, artists, and their publics before the U.S. Congress and key policy makers. Through legislative and grassroots action, PAA advocates for national policies that recognize, enhance, and foster the contributions the performing arts make to America. PAA's member network is fifteen national associations representing dance, presenting, musical theatre, theatre, opera, music, independent artists, and culturally specific arts groups.

Member organizations:

Alliance of Artists Communities	League of American Orchestras
Alternate ROOTS	National Alliance for Musical Theatre
American Composers Forum	National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
Association of Performing Arts Presenters	Network of Ensemble Theaters
Chamber Music America	New Music USA
Chorus America	OPERA America
Dance/USA	Theatre Communications Group

B. The National Performing Arts Convention: A Landmark Collaboration

The National Performing Arts Convention (NPAC) was a collaboration among national service organizations for all genres of the performing arts. Founded in a realization that many issues common to all performing arts disciplines can be more effectively addressed together, the NPAC partners determined to take action to build a better future. Participating organizations included American Composers Forum, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Chamber Music America, Chorus America, Conductors Guild, Dance/USA, League of American Orchestras, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, National Guild for Community Arts Education, National Performance Network, New Music USA, OPERA America, and Theatre Communications Group.

The coalition planned the first National Performing Arts Convention in Pittsburgh in 2004, the first convening of all of the performing arts disciplines. NPAC convened again in Denver in 2008 with almost 4,000 members of the performing arts community in attendance. The conference included a Town Hall session where attendees identified five priority areas for collective action among all the performing arts disciplines: Advocacy, Artists, Arts Education, Diversity, and Technology. NPAC's work is online at [www.performingartsconvention.org](http://www.performingartsconvention.org), a virtual convening for conversations on those priority areas.

### C. Growth of the Performing Arts Alliance

Since 2008, the Performing Arts Alliance has expanded its membership and board from five to 15 national groups (currently 14, as of Feb. 2018). The collegiality of planning, implementing, and following through on the NPAC conference engaged an additional set of national performing arts networks, demonstrated the potential of broadening the reach and increasing the impact of PAA, and identified several issue areas perceived by a large performing arts constituency as valuable to address.

PAA members and their constituencies now number over 30,000 arts organizations, artists, and arts supporters, reflecting many dimensions of diversity:

- performing arts discipline
- racial/ethnic/cultural
- geographic
- urban/suburban/rural
- operational capacity (budget, staffing)
- membership (organizations, professionals, volunteers)
- corporate status (not-for-profit, for-profit, unincorporated)
- sources of support (earned, individual, public, corporate/foundation)

PAA has primarily focused on legislative advocacy and policy development. Its main areas of work are: funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, arts education, and cultural exchanges; and policies for international artist visa processing, charitable giving, and wireless technology used in the performing arts.

In addition, from 2014-2016, PAA's board created task forces to explore select topics that were identified in the 2008 Denver NPAC Town Hall Meeting: diversity, equity, and inclusion; independent artists; research; and audiences and community engagement. These task forces offered an opportunity to learn about each member's capacity and commitments in these areas as well as opportunities for PAA to consider potential services for the field. From these task force discussions came the desire of the board for PAA to evolve into a learning forum for members to share best practices and have in-depth discussion about topics that impact each member's individual work and PAA's collective work. Perhaps most notable was the desire for diversity, equity and inclusion to be stated as core values of PAA, and to be incorporated into its work and operations. This plan reflects that commitment.

### D. The PAA Strategic Plan for 2017-2019

The strategic planning process has provided PAA with an opportunity to reconsider its mission, to clarify its vision and values, to think through priorities and how to achieve the most important outcomes, and to align members' shared ambitions with their collective capacity. During the period covered by this plan, PAA will pursue goals in both legislative advocacy work and leadership learning as well as evaluate its progress towards achieving them, as well as PAA's mission and vision. Actions and decisions will be checked against PAA's stated

values. Progress towards goals will also require PAA to assess the effectiveness of its structure, member roles, resource commitments and support, and partner and ally recruitment. An Action Plan for each year 2017-2019 will provide PAA with focus and the capacity to adapt to change. The process for developing Action Plans is designed to align the variety of PAA member interests and perspectives, and to represent the diversity of member cultural, financial and staff resources.

The PAA recognizes that, collectively, its members provide strength in numbers and diversity, have the potential to shape national conversations, can help weave the arts into the fabric of society, can represent the performing arts at the tables of other interests, and can assist the performing arts field to plan strategically longer into the future. The commonalities of members of the performing arts field transcend differences in size, location, and resources. The performing arts field is full of leaders who, through PAA, can bring energy, optimism, creativity, and great professional expertise to the work of crafting their most productive relationship.

## II. Mission

The Performing Arts Alliance is the national policy voice, leadership forum, and learning network for America's nonprofit performing arts organizations, artists, and allies.

## III. Vision

The Performing Arts Alliance envisions a United States in which the diverse ecology of the performing arts is deeply-valued and supported, adequately and equitably resourced, and where participation is accessible to all.

## IV. Purpose

A. The Performing Arts Alliance is uniquely able to achieve this mission and vision on behalf of the nonprofit performing arts sector:

1. through the directors who lead the coalition, and through the highly-skilled staff and government affairs directors who implement the advocacy work;
2. by coordinating federal advocacy efforts and aligning interests among organizations, artists, and allies in the nonprofit performing arts sector to create a more powerful, unified voice before Congress, the White House, and federal agencies;
3. by operating as a learning organization where board members, staffs, and member networks are engaged in sharing and building knowledge for an informed performing arts field;
4. by exploring how the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion affect the work of PAA members and the field; the policies for which PAA advocates; the leadership learning agenda through which PAA directors share and build knowledge; and PAA's operations and activities.

B. The PAA Board of Directors will:

1. Identify outcomes, objectives, and actions to advance the PAA mission and vision with respect to its values.
2. Identify outcomes and objectives for PAA's legislative advocacy and policy work.
3. Identify outcomes and objectives for PAA's leadership and learning agenda, including:
  - a. learning from each other
  - b. learning from others beyond PAA
  - c. exploring relationships and forging alliances
4. Explore the role, commitment, and capacity of each member in achieving PAA's legislative advocacy and leadership learning goals and outcomes.

V. Legislative Advocacy and Policy Development Priorities

A. Goals

PAA will advocate on a priority basis for federal level outcomes on issues that have significant impact on the nonprofit performing arts sector and for which representation of the nonprofit performing arts sector has unique importance. These advocacy issues include:

1. Funding the National Endowment for the Arts
  - a. Approve a budget that allows the NEA to achieve its vision that PAA shares: (1) all Americans enjoy diverse and accessible opportunities for arts participation, and (2) every community recognizes and celebrates its aspirations and achievements through the arts.
  - b. Provide policies and program strategies that adequately and equitably support diverse nonprofit performing arts sector opportunities for all Americans.
2. International Artist Visa Processing
  - a. Pass federal legislation to ensure timely processing of petitions filed by, or on behalf of, nonprofit arts-related organizations.
  - b. Enlist and cooperate with the Administration to persuade U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) to take ongoing immediate administrative action to make the artist visa process more timely, affordable and reliably consistent.

### 3. Federal Arts Education Policy and Funding

- a. Protect dedicated Assistance for Arts Education funding in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill (Title IV).
- b. Fully fund and implement the Well-Rounded Education provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Ensure that arts education is eligible for funding as a “well-rounded” subject.
- c. Encourage PAA members to advocate for inclusion of arts education in state and local ESSA implementation plans.
- d. Strengthen equitable access to arts learning by:
  - i. Making explicit the opportunity for the arts to help achieve Title I objectives.
  - ii. Thoroughly implementing the professional development opportunities for arts educators and school leaders in the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program (Title II) which includes the arts and the expanded STEM program eligibility for the arts in Title IV.
  - iii. Require states to report annually on student access to and participation in the arts.
  - iv. Support the Creative Arts Expression framework in early childhood program implementation, and keep the arts in the definition of “Essential Domains of School Readiness” for pre-school grants.
  - v. Improve the U.S. Department of Education’s national data collection regarding what students know and are able to do in the arts and the conditions for teaching and learning in arts education.

### 4. Nonprofit Charitable Giving Incentives

- a. Preserve incentives for charitable giving by protecting the full scope, value, and flexibility of the tax deduction for all forms of charitable gifts, including IRA rollover contributions.
- b. Reject any attempts to divide the charitable sector by favoring certain types of charities over others.
- c. Pass legislation that would allow performing artists as well as other artists to take an income tax deduction for the fair market value of their work when they donate it to charitable collecting institutions.

5. White Space Protection

- a. Provide professional wireless capability with successful interference protection to the performing arts.
- b. Restore access to a reliable geo-location database which will avoid interference between wireless microphones and TV band devices.
- c. Offer some form of interference protection to performing arts entities.

6. International Cultural Exchanges

- a. Approve the Office of Citizen Exchanges budget at a level that appropriately supports the cultural diplomacy opportunities, arts exchanges, and collaborations that share the rich artistic traditions of the United States with nations abroad.
- b. Increase State Department cultural resources and strengthen the operational capacity within its Cultural Programs Division dedicated to the oversight of grants and programs.
- c. Evaluate and publicly report on the impact, value, and success of arts diplomacy as part of State Department smart power strategies to build cross-cultural understanding.

7. PAA will continually monitor all levels of decision making for issues whose importance merits effective representation of the artists, arts organizations, and arts participants who comprise the nonprofit performing arts sector. These goal areas include:

- a. Artists, Entrepreneurs, and Small Business
- b. Arts in Health
- c. Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- d. Disaster Relief for Artists and Arts Organizations
- e. National Service and the Arts
- f. Healthcare, Housing and Employment
- g. Intellectual Property and Copyright
- h. Net Neutrality

B. Board Oversight Role

At the Q3 2016 board meeting, the PAA board and government affairs officers (GAs) discussed outcome goals for PAA's legislative advocacy and policy development agenda for 2017-2019. The PAA board will approve outcome goals for inclusion in the strategic plan. This full-group process will take place at the start of each multiyear strategic plan (so the next would be the Q3 2019 board meeting).

C. Legislative Advocacy and Policy Development Operations

At annual Q3 board meetings, PAA members will indicate the interest of their CEOs and/or staff working with the member GAs on specific legislative advocacy and policy development issues during the following year. Members will also offer up other policy and advocacy issues for PAA to consider for its annual Action Plan in addition to the shared federal legislative agenda.

At annual Q3 board meetings, board members will indicate their interest and self-select into a small group to work with the GAs and the general manager to draft the annual A&P Action Plan for the coming year. Organizations that have self-selected into this group can be represented by either the CEO sitting on the PAA board or a staff member who can commit to the work. This group will meet between each year's Q3 and Q4 board meeting to determine a suggested Action Plan to present to the full board for approval at the Q4 board meeting. The group will decide how best to structure its time to advance the Action Plan after it is approved. In preparing its recommendations, this group shall:

- a. Recommend strategies for the Action Plan for the coming year;
- b. Identify the roles and resources required to make progress;
- c. Evaluate the Action Plan against the PAA mission, vision, and values statements, including equity, diversity, and inclusion; and
- d. Evaluate whether current Action Plan strategies have been effective towards achieving progress;
- e. Consider these two strategies to achieve progress:
  - i. Engage PAA members to influence legislation and agency policy
  - ii. Identify and align with coalition partners to influence legislation and agency policy

## VI. Leadership and Learning Priorities

### A. Objectives

During the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan period, the Performing Arts Alliance will focus its leadership and learning activities on these objectives:

1. Successfully implementing the PAA federal advocacy and policy agenda by:
  - a. enhancing the advocacy skills, experience, and knowledge of PAA leaders and their constituents
  - b. creating the most effective resources to assist PAA leaders and their constituents in their advocacy
2. Providing opportunities for executive leadership development in:

- a. association trends, models, and management
  - b. methods of delivering information and learning services
  - c. using technology to enhance benefits and services
  - d. strategic planning, problem solving, and fostering creativity
  - e. outcomes measurement
3. Building skills for purposeful and productive civic engagement on issues impacting constituents by:
- a. increasing the ability of PAA leaders and constituencies to engage in civic issues
  - b. providing resources to assist PAA leaders and constituencies in state and local civic engagement
4. Fostering the development of collaborative local performing arts communities by:
- a. increasing interaction among local PAA member constituencies
  - b. catalyzing local performing arts community activity
5. Demonstrating and promoting PAA values including diversity, equity, and inclusion (See VII below) by:
- a. building PAA leaders' understanding of and ability to promulgate these values in nonprofit performing arts sector activities
  - b. reviewing and integrating these values in PAA advocacy and policy as well as leadership and learning activities

## B. Leadership and Learning Operations

Annually at the Q3 board meeting, board members will select topics they want to learn about for the coming year. Board members will indicate their interest and self-select into a small group—guided by the general manager—that will develop learning activities for each board meeting. This group can decide what, if any, learning can take place in between board meetings. Organizations that have self-selected into this group can be represented by either the CEO sitting on the PAA board or a staff member who can commit to the work. This group will meet between each year's Q3 and Q4 board meeting to determine a suggested list of learning activities to present to the full board for approval at the Q4 board meeting. The group will meet as needed in the following year to coordinate the learning activities approved at the Q4 board meeting.

1. In determining leadership and learning priorities and strategies, PAA will consider how PAA leaders can cultivate a nonprofit performing arts sector “community of practice” by:
  - a. learning about each other and their organizations



- b. learning from each other’s experience and expertise
  - c. learning from others with information and knowledge useful to PAA
  - d. fostering working relationships with others beneficial to PAA
  - e. reaching the members of PAA member groups with PAA L&L benefits
2. The group coordinating the learning activities with the general manager will take into consideration activities:
- a. best scheduled during or related to board convenings
  - b. that create resources or networks available as needed
  - c. that alert and inform PAA leaders of significant events and research
  - d. that take advantage of technology to enhance learning
  - e. that increase technological skills and knowledge

## VII. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Priorities

The PAA board has identified the closely related principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion as priority considerations in all PAA activities. By incorporating these principles into every aspect of its work, PAA intends to be truly relevant to and reflective of society at large, in which people are grappling with understanding the various, often radical, differences in their personal experiences and points of view. We intend to build a common language and understanding around these principles. PAA intends to apply these principles to its legislative advocacy and policy development activities, the leadership and learning agenda, and its governance and operations. The Alliance has benefitted from conversations about these sensitive and difficult principles among its members and with other organizations, and PAA intends to continue such conversations, taking constructive steps to assist its members to address how these points of view and experiences impact the artistic work being created, their internal policies, and the services provided to communities.

### A. Goals

The Performing Arts Alliance will focus on the following outcomes to advance its values of diversity, equity, and inclusion during the 2017-2019 plan period:

1. Broadening PAA leaders’ understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion through learning activities
2. Increasing PAA leaders’ ability to promulgate these values in the nonprofit performing arts sector, and, through that sector, in society at large
3. Reviewing PAA’s legislative advocacy and policy development and leadership and learning activities for opportunities to implement these values

### B. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Operations

Annually at the Q3 board meeting, board members will select diversity, equity, and inclusion topics that they want to learn about for the coming year—whether it be one topic explored in depth for an entire year or a series of various topics. Board members will indicate their interest and self-select into a small group led by the general manager that will develop learning activities for the coming year. This group can decide what, if any, learning activities can take place in between board meetings. Organizations that have self-selected into this group can be represented by either the CEO sitting on the PAA board or a staff member who can commit to the work. This group will meet between each year's Q3 and Q4 board meeting to determine the suggested activities to present to the full board for approval at the Q4 board meeting. The group will meet as needed in the following year to coordinate the diversity, equity, and inclusion learning activities approved at the Q4 board meeting.

## VIII. Values

In PAA's relationships; mission and goals; governance, decision-making processes, and operations; communications and advocacy; and programs and services, it will exemplify and implement the values of:

- A. **Diversity, equity, and inclusion within the performing arts sector**, where the voices, experiences, artistic expressions, and practices of all peoples and cultures are respected and acknowledged.
- B. **Continuous learning among PAA members and within the performing arts sector**, creating an environment where leaders share and build knowledge to support the work of member organizations, our communities, and the field at large.
- C. **The power of collective action that engages multiple voices within the sector**, equipping and empowering arts advocates to address government leaders and other decision makers about the issues affecting their arts community.
- D. **The leadership of the federal government in supporting the nonprofit arts sector nationwide** through resources and policies that acknowledge the performing arts' contributions to society and respond to the sector's needs.
- E. Fostering interactive and influential **local performing arts communities**.

## IX. Evaluation

- A. During the period of this Strategic Plan, PAA members, staff, and the board as a whole will review the effectiveness of each current year's Action Plan as they develop the goals and strategies for the next year's Action Plan. Specifically, the review will consider:
  - 1. How well strategies, and activities achieved desired outcomes
  - 2. How well strategies, activities, and outcomes aligned with PAA mission, vision, and values

3. How efficiently strategies and activities drew upon PAA resources
4. How environmental trends are affecting PAA priorities, strategies, and activities
5. What is working and what improvements should be made
6. In what areas of activity additional external support could yield superior benefit

B. Because PAA board meetings are so important to the value that PAA adds to its members' advocacy, policy development, leadership development, and learning, the last few minutes of each board meeting will be devoted to an assessment of the effectiveness of that meeting. Specifically, board members will consider what was accomplished, what was learned, and what could be improved.