



NEWS RELEASE

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NASAA Welcomes 2025 Board Members

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO – The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is pleased to announce the election of four members to its board of directors. As part of a rigorous national nomination process, state and jurisdictional arts agencies elected these exemplary leaders at NASAA's 2024 business meeting during NASAA Assembly 2024.

NASAA members elected these three new board members to serve three-year terms:



Karen Ewald

Executive Director

Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts

Karen Ewald serves as the executive director of the [Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts](#) (SFCA) in Honolulu. Her work centers on developing and administering the agency's budget, planning, and staff and board relations. She also serves as the liaison to the Hawai'i State Legislature. Prior to her current role, Ewald served as the director of the Art in Public Places Program and Hawai'i State Art Museum at the SFCA, and for 10 years as programs manager for education and exhibitions at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. She served as president of the Hawai'i Museums Association, and currently serves on the board of trustees for Creative West. (Board term 2025-2027)



Shawn Oban

Chair

North Dakota Council on the Arts

[North Dakota Council on the Arts](#) Chair Dr. Shawn Oban is a seasoned educator, administrator and musician with extensive experience in Bismarck (North Dakota) Public Schools, including roles as a principal and district fine arts coordinator. With a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of North

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Dakota, he focused on the impact of music on children in poverty, reflecting his lifelong passion for music and the arts. An accomplished musician, Oban has performed extensively in bands and solo acoustic shows. Beyond education, he served on the Bismarck City Commission, contributing to community arts and culture initiatives. His achievements, including the Golden Apple Award and "40 under 40" by *The Bismarck Tribune*, showcase his dedication to education, music and community enrichment in North Dakota. (Board term 2025-2027)



Adele Sicilia
Director
New Hampshire State Arts Council

With more than 10 years leadership experience focusing on program development and creating positive organizational cultures while procuring funding and managing budgets exceeding \$50 million, Adele Sicilia brings both management experience and an appreciation of the arts in all of its forms to the position of director of the [New Hampshire State Council on the Arts](#), which she began in 2023. For 16 years, she provided support to New Hampshire families in her career at the

Department of Health and Human Services. While there, she identified strategic priorities and developed programming that drew on the ability of the arts to transform lives. Among the programs she created was the Magnify Voices Expressive Arts Contest, which celebrates the creativity of New Hampshire youth and demonstrates the importance of mental health for a child's development. Sicilia's experience in state government includes working with elected officials, developing long-range strategic plans and navigating the budget process. In addition, she has worked as a professional photographer and a graphic designer. She holds degrees from Northeastern University, Boston College and the New England School of Photography. (Board term 2025-2027)

At its September meeting, the NASAA board elected one new at-large member for a two-year term:



Shannon Daut
National Director
US Regional Arts Organizations

Shannon Daut is the national director for the [US Regional Arts Organizations](#) (US RAO), where she fosters collaborative efforts between the six RAOs to serve communities across the country through the arts. Her career has included executive leadership roles at regional, state and local arts agencies. From 2016 – 2023, she led the Cultural Affairs Division for the City of Santa Monica, California, where she integrated the arts into all aspects of life in the community. In that role she conceptualized and led

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the implementation of Acknowledge and Reframe Together, a program that produces public art and civic memory projects that center community voices, and Art of Recovery, which supported artistic efforts that addressed the city's recovery needs. Prior to that role, she was the executive director of the Alaska State Council on the Arts. While there, she reimagined and reinvigorated the leadership role of the agency in state policy, from tourism and economic development to education and Alaska Native cultural advancement. Before moving to Alaska, Daut was deputy director of the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF, now Creative West), where she oversaw the organization's work in developing cultural policy and building technology systems that served the arts field. Daut also has served on the boards of the National Performance Network, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters and WESTAF. She received her bachelor's degree in communication arts/film from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her graduate degree in communication/rhetoric from the University of Colorado-Denver. (Board term 2025-2026)

In addition, state and jurisdictional arts agencies elected these directors for a second three-year term:

- Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director, [Massachusetts Cultural Council](#)
- Sue Gens, Executive Director, [Minnesota State Arts Board](#)

"We gratefully welcome Karen, Shawn, Adele and Shannon to the NASAA board, and we're pleased that Michael and Sue will continue their service," said NASAA President and CEO Pam Breaux. "These talented leaders bring profound commitments to serving the public, a broad range of professional experience, and deep understanding of the importance of arts and culture to our communities. We are eager to work with this new team and welcome their expertise and guidance."



Left to right: Michael Bobbitt, Sue Gens, LaVon Bracy Davis, Gene Meneray

Per NASAA's bylaws, the NASAA board elected these officers to serve on the Executive Committee:

- *2nd Vice Chair:* LaVon Bracy Davis, Former Council Member, [Florida Division of Arts and Culture](#)
- *Secretary:* Gene Meneray, Council Member, [Louisiana State Arts Council](#)

"The 2025 NASAA board represents dynamic and dedicated leadership from our field and allied sectors," said NASAA Chair Donna Collins. "I am excited to work with these outstanding leaders as we advance NASAA's mission to strengthen state arts agencies and continue to advocate for the value of arts and creativity across all communities."

For more information on NASAA's board members, visit [NASAA Board of Directors](#).

Founded in 1968, the [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies](#) (NASAA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. In collaboration with the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts councils, we advance the arts as a powerful path to economic prosperity, rural resilience, good health, education success and strong communities in which everyone thrives. NASAA serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding for the arts as well as the policies and programs of state arts agencies. For more information about NASAA and the work of state arts agencies, visit <https://nasaa-arts.org/>.

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