



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

The Nancy Hanks Center
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20506-0001
202/682-5400
www.arts.gov

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Contact: Liz Stark, 202-682-5744, starke@arts.gov

ROCCO LANDESMAN ANNOUNCES INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION AS RECIPIENT OF 2009 NATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Indiana Arts Commission acknowledged for exceptional promotion of access to the arts

Washington, D.C. — Rocco Landesman, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, announced today the [Indiana Arts Commission](#) is the recipient of the 2009 National Accessibility Leadership Award/grant for their outstanding accessibility work. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), the award recognizes exceptional initiatives or programs that make the arts accessible and inclusive for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

The award is presented to the Indiana Arts Commission in acknowledgement of its leadership and highly effective work to make the arts fully inclusive throughout its organization, programming, and state. Among the accomplishments of the Indiana Arts Commission:

- As a result of discussion round-tables and surveys from the 2004 Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities, the Indiana Arts Commission, in partnership with VSA arts of Indiana and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, created [ArtsWORK Indiana](#) (AWI). ArtsWORK Indiana is a grassroots organization that facilitates access to careers in the arts for people with disabilities through awareness, education, and encouragement.
- AWI's website (www.artsworkindiana.org) provides information, resources, employment, and internship opportunities, as well as an artist directory and discussion forums. AWI invites guest speakers to monthly meetings to address topics such as marketing, artwork sales, and funding opportunities.
- In Spring 2009, AWI took its programs to six different areas of the state, partnering with arts organizations, disability service providers, colleges, and community centers to hold "Creative Connections: Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities" workshops. At each workshop the AWI chairperson gave presentations on how to access and use the free resources available on the website, and a local artist from each area shared personal experiences, tips, and advice as a working artist and peer.

Rocco Landesman said, "Since becoming Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, I have been talking about "art works," and the Indiana Arts Commission will help ensure even more opportunities for American artists in the three ways that I mean this phrase: artists of every background should have the opportunity to create new art works; they should participate in all the ways that art can work to expand us as human beings and knit together our communities; and perhaps most importantly,

they should have the chance to be working artists who are part of this country's real economy.”

The Arts Endowment and NASAA established the National Accessibility Leadership Award in 2001. Since 2002, the award has provided a \$30,000 NEA competitive grant to the selected state or regional arts agency to advance its access work. With their award, the Indiana Arts Commission and AWI will expand their support for artists with disabilities by offering grants for projects that will impact the artist's career development.

Previous award recipients are the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs (2008); the Minnesota State Arts Board (2007); the Maine Arts Commission (2006); the Massachusetts Cultural Council (2005); the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (2004); the New York State Council on the Arts (2003); the Ohio Arts Council (2002); and the Arizona Commission on the Arts (2001).

The NEA Office of AccessAbility provides advocacy and technical assistance to encourage accessibility in arts programming for older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and people who reside in institutions. The AccessAbility office works internally with Arts Endowment staff, grant panels, and grantees to make NEA-supported arts programs fully accessible. The office also convenes panels and seminars and initiates cooperative projects with other federal agencies and nonprofit groups to better educate professionals serving older adults and people with disabilities. Highlighted projects include:

- The NEA Leadership Initiative on Universal Design, which educates designers, schools of design, and others on a design process that goes beyond special accommodations to incorporate features that may be used by everyone at all stages of life.
- The Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities leadership initiative, which features a partnership with the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA. The initiative convenes statewide forums with representatives from the arts, rehabilitation, education, and disability communities to address barriers and implement strategies for advancing training and career opportunities of artists and arts administrators with disabilities.
- The first-of-its-kind study *Creativity & Aging: The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults*. The NEA initiated and is the lead sponsor of this study.
- A public-private partnership developed by the NEA to plan and support the National Summit on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities that convened July 22-24, 2009 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. This partnership included the Arts Endowment, the Kennedy Center, VSA arts, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Social Security Administration, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the U.S. Department of Education, NAMM, Quest: Arts for Everyone, and AARP. It was the second national meeting convened on this important topic by the Arts Endowment; the first took place in 1998. Summit participants reviewed progress concerning educational and career opportunities in the arts over the past decade and developed recommendations to further advance arts training and job opportunities for individuals with disabilities who are pursuing arts careers.

Information about the NEA AccessAbility Office and its programs and publications are available at <http://www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/office.html>.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the membership organization of the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. The public sector plays a unique and essential role in ensuring that the benefits of the arts accrue to all American communities. State arts agencies broaden citizen access to the arts in every corner of the

country, making the cultural, civic, educational, and economic benefits of the arts an essential ingredient of state policy and practice.

The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts -- both new and established -- bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the largest national annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

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