

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY

Discussion Guide

Arts Participation in America: Trends and Perspectives

NASAA Web Seminar - August 18, 3:00 p.m. EDT

This Web seminar will provide a national overview of arts participation, beginning with highlights from the National Endowment for the Arts' latest [Survey of Public Participation in the Arts](#) (SPPA). A panel of arts participation experts will then elaborate on current trends, barriers and opportunities, as well as strategies for strengthening participation at the state and local levels.

NASAA encourages all who are viewing the seminar to compare and contrast this national perspective with your own experiences and to consider the implications of these trends to your unique state or community. Below are a few questions you can use to facilitate this reflection, alone or with colleagues who have gathered to view the seminar with you.

PARTICIPATION TRENDS

- How are the trends captured in the SPPA playing out in your community or in your state?
- Beyond what the SPPA can collect, what other participation trends are you observing? What participation choices and venues seem increasingly prevalent?
- What barriers to public arts participation are of most concern to you?

IMPLICATIONS FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND ARTISTS

- How are these trends affecting arts organizations and artists? What are the short-term and long-term consequences of these shifts?
- How is the arts field adapting? What strategies are you currently using to engage audiences or to broaden, deepen or diversify participation in your programs? Are these strategies working? Why or why not?

IMPLICATIONS FOR ARTS LEADERS

- What are the implications of these trends for statewide organizations, public arts agencies or other service organizations?
- What kinds of support (such as training, research, knowledge-sharing, funding, etc.) might best help organizations and artists in our state adapt to changes in arts participation?
- What arts participation issues do you think need further research or investigation?

QUESTIONS FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES

- **Grant-making:** How is participation addressed in our guidelines, criteria and application forms?

- **Non-grant support:** What else can we do? How can we use our influence and assets (convening power, training programs, networking, communications, etc.) to strengthen arts participation?
- **Information-gathering:** What participation questions are we asking on our forms and surveys? How can we help grantees provide reliable data?
- **Public expectations:** Do we know what our citizens value the most about arts participation? Can we convey those expectations to decision makers?
- **Relationships:** How should we relate to venues or groups that aren't nonprofits?
- **Arts education:** Where can our resources have the greatest impact?