

VISIT YOUR FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS!

Monday, July 23, 2012

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From The Performing Arts Alliance:

July 19, 2012

In the next couple of weeks, Congress will adjourn for its annual summer recess. Representatives and Senators will be in their home districts and states August 4 through September 9. During this summer break, the Performing Arts Alliance would like to encourage you to reach out to your federal elected officials and visit them in their district and state offices.

A number of legislative policy issues that will impact the nonprofit performing arts community are in motion, so this is the perfect time to continue to build relationships and brief your Representative and Senators on the issues important to the performing arts field. Introduce you and your organization, add them to your mailing list, request a meeting to tell them about who you serve, and establish yourself as a powerful resource for them.

Tips for In-person Legislative Visits:

Share relevant, personal stories. How has your organization benefited from National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) support? What community partnerships are you engaged in? How were you first exposed to the arts?

Be prepared with talking points. What issues do you want to focus on in your meeting? Does the legislator sit on committees that oversee those issues? Most meetings are brief. Advance preparation will help you speak concisely and effectively. Visit the links to key issue briefs below.

Be prepared with leave-behinds. Though many staffers attempt to take detailed notes, a leave-behind outlining your "ask" and reasons for the "ask" will ensure your message is passed on accurately to the legislator. In addition, feel free to leave a brochure on your organization's programs and performances. Invite Congress to Your Performance or Event

One of the best ways to convince elected officials of the public value of your performing arts organization is to show them - firsthand - a performance experience. Take advantage of members of Congress in their home districts and states this summer and invite them to a concert, reception, community event, or education program.

If you decide to invite your member(s) of Congress to a performance or event, be sure to check the [Performing Arts Alliance Guide to Professional Gift Rules](#) in advance. The Alliance has crafted clear guidelines for understanding how to invite members of Congress to your events, keeping in mind the Congressional gift rules.

Your advocacy for federal arts funding and charitable giving is vital as Congress works to make budgetary choices in this difficult economic time. The arts community must raise its voice and stress the public value of federal support for the arts. The arts are cornerstones of economically-strong communities nationwide and contribute to community progress, growth, and improved quality of life. Federal policy and funding support should continue to recognize and reflect that.

Visit the links below for talking points and links to advocacy campaigns on the NEA, arts education, and charitable giving.
[National Endowment for the Arts Arts Education Charitable Giving](#)

Find Your Elected Officials

Click [here](#) to find your federal elected officials. When you contact them, be sure to say you are a constituent and request to schedule a meeting with your legislator or the relevant staffer.

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