FY17 APPROPRIATIONS ARE SET: LET'S FOCUS ON FY18

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Early this month, Congress passed a fiscal year 2017 omnibus spending bill finalizing the federal budget through the rest of FY17, which ends September 30. In an environment where Congress is focused on cutting non-defense discretionary funding, we were pleased to see that increases were recommended for the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of State's exchange programs, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The bill also includes full support for the arts education program at the U.S. Department of Education, and initial funds were provided to support the new well-rounded education grants to schools created in the Every Student Succeeds Act. The president has signed the FY17 spending bill into law, and now it's time to sharpen our focus on FY18 appropriations.

What's next?

The National Endowment for the Arts recently published this helpful infographic explaining the appropriations process. Currently, the House Budget Committee is writing its FY18 budget resolution, legislation that proposes various budget totals and spending categories for the federal budget. The Senate Budget Committee will do the same. These resolutions inform the appropriators who debate FY18 funding levels for federal agencies and programs. PAA will monitor the appropriations process, keep you updated, and inform you of opportunities to take action and contact Congress.

In the meantime, this is a key time to build and strengthen relationships with members of Congress. This is essential so that they are aware of the work we do in communities. You can find contact information for your lawmakers' local and Capitol Hill offices here: http://bit.ly/2jsHDDb. Try to meet in person when lawmakers are at home for recess, and don't underestimate the important role congressional staff play in making policy recommendations. Check out the 2017 House calendar (http://bit.ly/2gHL2yM) and the 2017 Senate calendar (http://bit.ly/2lwx2rC) to plan ahead for recess periods.