

State and Regional Partnerships

FISCAL YEAR 2000 FACTS AND FIGURES Partnership Agreements

Dollar Amount of State
Partnership Agreements:
\$27,934,954

Dollar Amount of
Regional Partnership
Agreements: \$4,832,915

The National Endowment for the Arts greatly extends its impact through its partnerships with the 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies and seven multistate regional organizations. In FY 2000, Partnership Agreements helped support local, state, and regional arts activities for children and adults across the nation. A complete listing of Partnership Agreements is available online at www.arts.gov.

State arts agencies used their federal and state appropriated funds in 2000—totaling nearly \$400 million—to provide more than 27,000 grants to more than 5,600 communities. NEA funds helped promote community development through the arts by supporting assistance to arts groups, artist residencies, preservation of cultural heritage, development of arts in education, assistance to artists, and cultural tourism initiatives, among other projects.

Oklahoma Arts Council Uses Art to Address Local Issues

State arts agencies do more than just make grants—they become involved with the community. The Oklahoma Arts Council, which received nearly \$500,000 through an NEA Partnership Agreement in FY 2000, is a good example. One of the projects for which the Council used its state and federal funding was the Youth Arts After-School Program. This program, a partnership between the Council and the State Department of Human Services, supports long-term artist residencies to provide arts experiences for low-income children in child-care centers. In 2000, the program provided funding to four arts and community organizations, which have trained and placed resident artists in 150 childcare centers around the state to conduct after-school arts programs. Artists have involved children in creating murals and producing plays, a significant alternative to passive activities, like watching videotapes, which occur in some daycare settings. Childcare cen-

ters reported that they have seen a decrease in negative behavior, and increases in children's attendance, attention span, and respect for one another.

The Oklahoma Arts Council also helped preserve the state's cultural heritage through an apprenticeship program in mandolin making. Oklahoma has been home to some of the most significant figures in American music, from Woody Guthrie to Bob Wills. Large parts of the state's population are actively involved in traditional American music, as well as traditional Celtic music, in which the mandolin plays a vital role. Master artist Nick Richardson, making mandolins since 1985, participated in the apprenticeship program to share his knowledge and continue the tradition of building acoustic stringed instruments in Oklahoma. Richardson's work with apprentice Matthew Hill will provide a source of handcrafted instruments to keep traditional music styles alive. Richardson and Hill will give a presentation at the library on the art of mandolin building, and perform on the instruments they have built.



Master mandolin maker Nicholas Richardson at work as part of the Oklahoma Arts Council's apprenticeship program in mandolin-making. (Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Arts Council)

The NEA also awarded Partnership Agreements to seven regional arts organizations, created to transcend state boundaries and provide access to a greater variety of arts experiences, especially in underserved areas. One of the ways the NEA works with the regional arts organizations is through the Regional Touring Program, which provides assistance—through federal, state, and private funds—to performing artists and companies for interstate touring, giving priority to underserved communities. Virtually all grants awarded supplement touring performances with other community activities, such as working in schools and making presentations to civic organizations.

Partnership of Regional Arts Organizations Enhances Regional Touring Program

In 1998, the regional arts organizations Arts Midwest and Mid-America Arts Alliance collaborated to form the Heartland Arts Fund, with support from the NEA Regional Partnership Agreements. The Heartland Arts Fund supports and initiates tours in 15 Midwestern states, giving communities access to artists and companies in dance, music, and theater. The collaboration between the two regional organizations broadens their geographic reach and streamlines administrative costs to help them realize the goal of connecting the arts to audiences.

The Heartland Arts Fund includes both a Community Connections component and opportunities for special projects. Community Connections helps support performing artists' fees for presenters from the 15-state region. Close to half of all Heartland events occur in rural communities. Presenters can choose from a catalog of almost 400 performers or request support for a performer they have chosen. Presenters receiving grants must include at least one educational activity in the event.

The Heartland Arts Fund also periodically launches special tours of select artists, such as the 17-site tour in 2000 by the Minneapolis-based Guthrie Theater, presenting William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The

tour visited both metropolitan and rural communities in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and North and South Dakota with performances and carefully crafted educational sessions. Performing in areas rarely visited by a major theatrical company, the Guthrie Theater was met in every community with enthusiastic standing ovations and many sold-out shows. In all, more than 50,000 people experienced the Guthrie Theater in performance—including 20,277 students. In Minnesota alone, schools from 68 communities attended matinee performances of the play. In addition, Guthrie Theater actors and technical staff offered 87 workshops to nearly 4,000 students and artists in 30 communities.

Randy Reyes as Puck, Alvin J. Keith as Lysander, Cheyenne Casebier as Helena, and Rafael Oliveira as Demetrius in a scene from the Guthrie Theater's touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Joe Dowling. (Photo by Michal Daniel)

