



# new mexico arts

NEW MEXICO'S  
STATE ARTS  
AGENCY

STRATEGIC PLAN | 2024–2029



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**ON THE COVER** *Persist, Repeat, Reflect*, Joanna Keane  
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**AT LEFT** Doña Ana Arts Council's lowrider show, *Dale Gas!*,  
2018, photo by Emmitt Booher

**AT RIGHT** Keshet Dance Company, 2019

our  
mission  
public support  
for the arts to  
ensure the arts  
are central  
to the lives of  
new mexicans

our vision  
a new mexico with  
vibrant communities,  
meaningful quality of life,  
and a robust economy



Recently,  
I was asked  
to describe  
New Mexico  
Arts in 350  
characters  
or fewer.

After wrestling with how to distill all the work we do down to so few words, I landed on the following:

*New Mexico Arts (NMA) is the federally authorized state arts agency. NMA administers the state's Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs serving the public, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.*

Though I believe this description is accurate and comprehensive for its meager 350 characters, what it does not convey are the foundational values that drive the work NMA does. Given the unprecedented upheaval in the arts and culture sector the last few years, we have a rare opportunity to look deeply at what we do, how we do it, who we serve, and why—both internally as an organization and externally in conversation with the arts and culture field in New Mexico. To do this work, we will need to take an open and expansive approach to the next five years while staying securely grounded in our core values. With that in mind, the strategic plan on the following pages looks very different



**AT LEFT** Albuquerque Folk Festival Fiddle Workshop, 2019

from past NMA plans in response to the evolving needs of the arts and culture sector.

This plan—rooted in longstanding values—frames MNA's next phase of innovation within four overarching goals.

1 center equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all programs and policies

deliver responsive, impactful, and sustainable programs

3 effectively communicate the value of arts in community

4 align agency to support strategic goals

On behalf of New Mexico Arts and the State Arts Commission, I welcome your feedback on this living document as we work together to ensure all New Mexicans have access to arts programs and services that represent the broad range of cultural expression in our diverse and beautiful state.

MICHELLE LAFLAMME-CHILDS  
Executive Director, New Mexico Arts

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

# about new mexico arts

As New Mexico's State Arts Agency (SAA), New Mexico Arts (NMA) is one of the 56 federally recognized state and jurisdictional arts agencies in the United States.

Most SAAs across the country were created following the 1965 establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to serve as the local experts and administrators of federal and state arts funds and to "ensure that every community in America receives the cultural, civic, economic and educational benefits of the arts."

According to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) every state and U.S. jurisdiction has a designated arts agency because:

## america's **communities** need the arts

The arts foster vibrant communities and create productive places for people to live, work, play and raise their families

## america's **economy** needs the arts

The arts put people to work, produce tax revenue, stimulate business and retain a talented work force.

## america's **children** need the arts

The arts ignite young imaginations and boost achievement in academic fundamentals.

## america's **democracy** needs the arts

The arts support a strong democracy, engaging us in civic discourse and bridging divides among us.

## america's **spirit** needs the arts

Intrinsic to the arts is the power to connect us, uplift us and help us perceive things in new ways.

## america's **well-being** needs the arts

The arts foster physical, mental and emotional health.

## america's **heritage** is embodied in the arts

The arts preserve our legacies and our roots, passing along our nation's unique character and traditions to future generations.



**AT LEFT** Santa Fe Children's Museum  
Painting on Fine Art Friday



Serving the public as a hub for the arts and culture sector in New Mexico, NMA strives to support the organizations, artists, and culture bearers who are the creators and sustainers of our rich and diverse cultural past, present, and future.

This support can take many forms: dedicated state and federal funding opportunities, specialized projects and programs, staff expertise in arts administration, peer convenings and conversations, honors and recognitions, technical assistance, and an ongoing commitment to our mission of ensuring the arts are central to the lives of New Mexicans.

The grants program funds non-profit, governmental, and public education organizations to provide arts programs and services to New Mexicans of all ages in every part of the state. Specifically, arts organizations use the financial support offered by NMA to **meet organizational challenges, leverage other funding opportunities, hire and maintain staff, and develop and deliver a wide variety of arts participation opportunities.** Other NMA projects and programs offer **specialized content for military, disability, traditional/folk art, or rural communities.** The Art in Public Places program assists local entities in selecting contemporary art for

public spaces and buildings, initiates **hyper-local, community engaged temporary public art projects**, and facilitates large-scale, **site-specific public art commissions** which often speak to important topics or issues in a given location or community.

This is all accomplished through durable relationships and partnerships with artists, arts organizations, municipalities, county governments, tribal governments, educational institutions, other state agencies, and nonprofit organizations in urban and rural communities that reach into the far corners of the state. This strong network is the framework that allows NMA to continually work towards ensuring access to the arts for all New Mexicans.

As a conduit for public funding for arts and creativity in our state, NMA has a direct and considerable impact on the development of stronger and more vibrant communities. Each year, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) allocates 40% of its grantmaking budget to the states through the SAAs and regional arts organizations. In the last 20 years, NMA has infused New Mexico's arts and culture sector with nearly \$18.5 million in grants funds which are matched at least 1:1 with other cash and in-kind sources. Since its inception in 1986, NMA's Art in Public Places Program has helped public sites invest more than \$30 million in public artworks for New Mexicans to enjoy.

## the planning process

Preparation for the 2024–2029 New Mexico Arts strategic plan began with a survey of the field and the public, as well as interviews of arts sector leaders in the months leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, virtual planning sessions resulted in the development of a new mission statement. The new mission statement defines what a state arts agency does and who benefits: Public support for the arts to ensure the arts are central to the lives of New Mexicans.

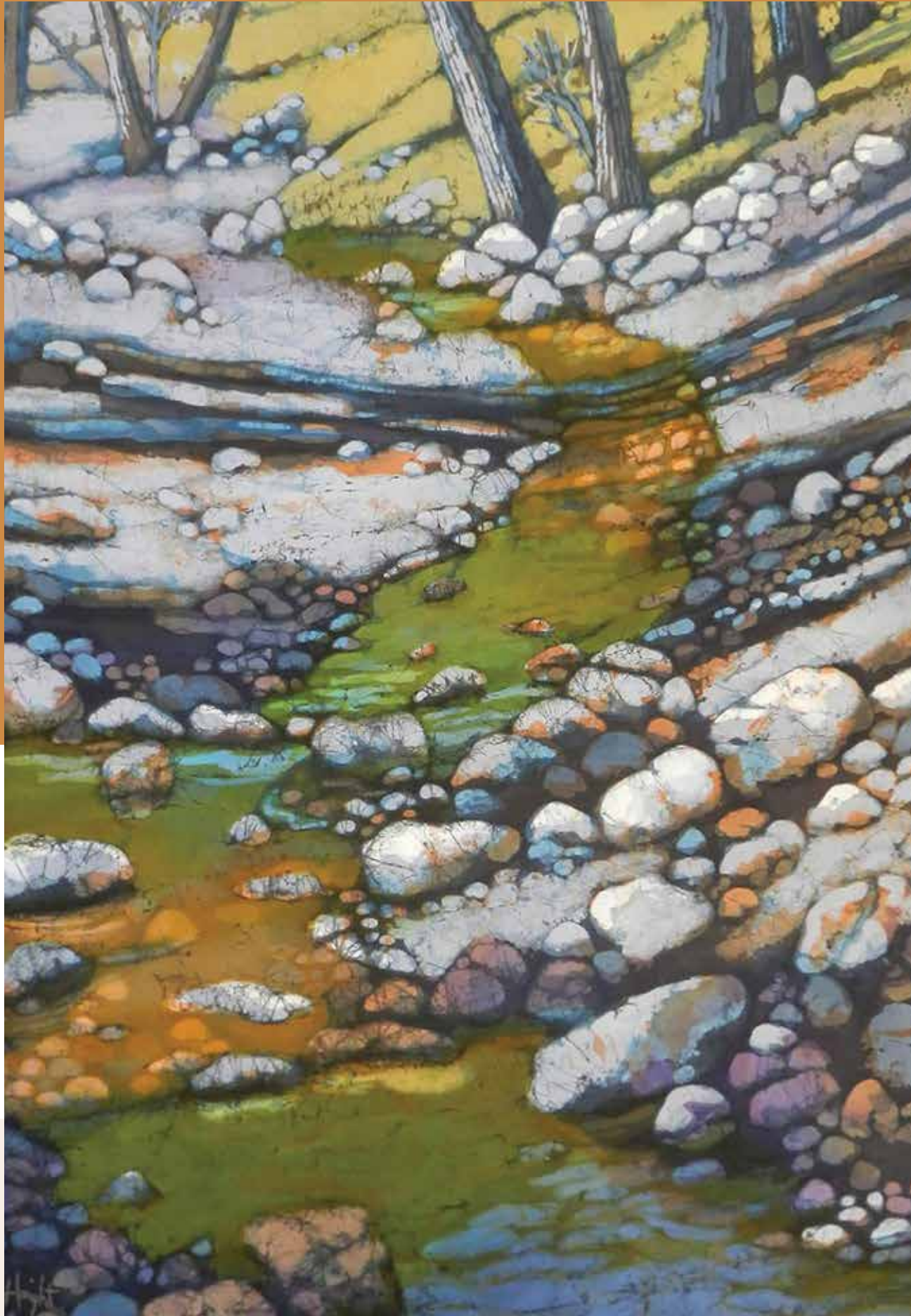
Assessments of the challenges and opportunities facing arts and culture sector continued into 2022, and in conjunction with the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs' 2023–2024 strategic plan, resulted in this guiding document that serves as a framework for the division's programming and public service.

Throughout implementation of the plan, New Mexico Arts leadership will assess and measure goals using data gathering, annual reporting, and stakeholder feedback. Our program-stakeholders include students and educators; artists of all disciplines; and visitors to and users of public buildings and spaces. Organizational stakeholders include nonprofit arts organizations, local communities, governments, universities and colleges, and private businesses. The broadest group of stakeholders is the citizens of New Mexico. Specific findings will be incorporated in annual work plans for each fiscal year. The planning process was facilitated by Sabrina Pratt of SVPratt Creative Strategies.

**AT RIGHT** Theater Grottesco, the cast of THE OTHER, 2019, photo by Marc Romanelli







# goal 1

## center equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all programs and policies

New Mexico Arts has a public mandate to facilitate access to the arts and to ensure every New Mexico community can thrive through the cultural, civic, economic, and educational benefits of the arts. NMA strives to invest public resources that directly impact New Mexico's artists and organizations in an equitable, transparent, and accessible manner and support the field in addressing equity and accessibility issues affecting rural, tribal, veteran, disabled, and other historically underserved communities.

**AT LEFT** *Stream of Life*, Cathy Haight

**AT RIGHT** *The Love Armor Project Humvee Cozy*, Shirley Klinghoffer, 2018





*New Mexico is home to more than 2.1 million people. Though it is the fifth largest state geographically it is one of the most rural, with only 17 persons per square mile compared to the U.S. average of 87. New Mexico has the highest percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents of any state and the third largest share of Native Americans following Alaska and Oklahoma. New Mexico also stands out with a higher population of Veterans as compared to many other states.*

# identify and change policies and practices to achieve equity and eliminate barriers to participation

- ▶ Participate in the national dialogue on evolving state arts agency equitable practices.
- ▶ Research current equity and accessibility best practices, using outside expertise as needed, and make appropriate changes to internal processes.
- ▶ Review laws and external policies that may constrain NMA's ability to be responsive to the public.
- ▶ Encourage board diversity for grantee organizations through application and evaluation criteria.

- ▶ Provide artists, arts organizations, partners, and NMA staff with accessibility resources, training, and professional development.
- ▶ Engage new communities through the development of innovative grant categories, microgrants, and funding formulas.
- ▶ Use NMA's Accessibility Self-Assessment and Access Plan to continue to improve access and compliance with ADA requirements.
- ▶ Use principles of Universal Design when creating materials, communication, and programming.



# cultivate and deepen relationships in rural, tribal, and other underserved communities

- ▶ Hold "office hours" in communities, in partnership with other DCA divisions, state agencies, and partner organizations to gain feedback, provide technical assistance, and spread awareness of NMA programming and services.
- ▶ Explore new models to support the development of rural and Native arts councils.
- ▶ Partner with DCA's Tribal Liaison in working with Native communities to assess needs and develop relevant programming.
- ▶ Travel the New Mexico Arts Commission meetings around the state, include presentations/participation from local DCA divisions, artists, and arts organizations.



**AT LEFT** Special Orchestra of La Joya at Expo New Mexico 2020, photo by Gair Linhart  
**ABOVE** Afreeka Santa Fe's Fiesta Fela, 2016





## goal 2

### deliver responsive, impactful, and sustainable programs

As the official state arts agency and state partner of the National Endowment for the Arts, New Mexico Arts fills a unique leadership position within the state arts ecosystem. Since its establishment in 1965, the agency is the only statewide entity dedicated to ensuring that all New Mexicans have access to the arts.

**AT LEFT** *Taos Canyon*, Heather Gallegos Rex

**AT RIGHT** Pueblo of Pojoaque Youth Hoop Dancers, photo by Lightbender Visuals







*The New Mexico Arts grants program supports arts activities serving an average of 1.75 million people each year, including 1.5 million adults and 250,000 children.*

## invest in new mexico's creative development through grantmaking

- ▶ Streamline and improve grantmaking through regular assessment to respond to constituent needs.
- ▶ Develop innovative funding opportunities designed to reach new applicants or support new programming,
- ▶ Sustain resiliency and ongoing operations of arts sector organizations through grant funding,
- ▶ Explore tactics to simplify management of the grants process for the field and agency.
- ▶ Secure additional state, federal, and/or other resources to increase the impact of grant support to New Mexico's arts and culture sector.

## build the arts and culture field through outreach, education, and convenings

- ▶ Increase organizational development support to arts organizations, local arts councils, and arts service organizations through technical assistance and regional/ statewide peer group convenings.
- ▶ Increase awareness of opportunities for artists at all career levels through outreach, paying particular attention to our underserved communities.
- ▶ Support and sustain traditional art forms practiced in New Mexico through the Folk Arts Program.
- ▶ Engage with partners to conduct outreach, training, professional development, and technical assistance to encourage program participation.



## enrich new mexico's communities through innovative and diverse public art

- ▶ Facilitate the use of 1% AIPP funds through the acquisition of public art in conjunction with owner agencies via purchases and site-specific commission projects.
- ▶ Educate AIPP owner agencies in standard industry best practices for maintenance/conservation/asset management of their public art works.
- ▶ Increase general AIPP awareness and participation from rural artists.
- ▶ Explore limited life-span projects and community specific projects in communities with fewer AIPP dollars.
- ▶ Initiate digitization of historical AIPP files.

**AT LEFT** Paper Mache Workshop, 2020, Cambio, Inc.

**ABOVE** 108 Death Masks: A Communal Prayer for Peace and Justice, Nikesha Breeze, part of the 2022 Four Sites of Return: Ritual, Remembrance, Reparation & Reclamation Exhibition at the NMSU Art Museum, Las Cruces.

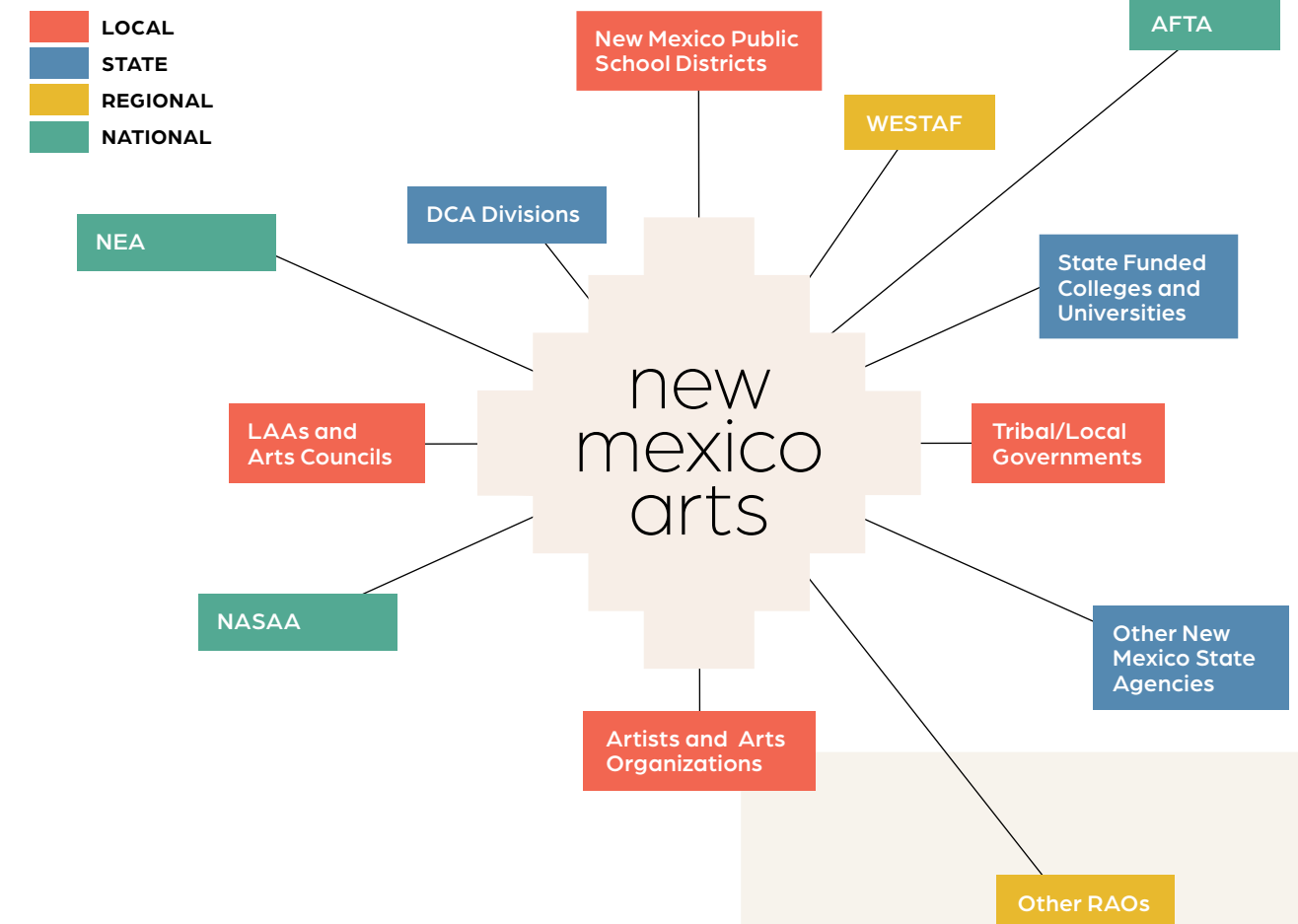


provide opportunities for new mexicans to explore and participate in the arts

- Support arts opportunities for K-12 students and educators in schools and communities through funding, partnerships, and advocacy.
- Deepen New Mexico's engagement with the literary arts through the New Mexico Poet Laureate program with the State Library and the National Endowment for the Arts' Poetry Out Loud program.
- Promote traditional folk arts by increasing participation of master artists and apprentices and investing in organizations that support traditional folk arts projects.
- Serve veterans and active-duty military, and their families, through New Mexico Arts and the Military programming.
- Evaluate 2023 pilot Artist in Residence program to serve as a model for an ongoing, sustainable Artist in Residence program with possible partners in DCA divisions, other state agencies, and private sector organizations.

**AT LEFT** Zoe Callan, Native American Community Academy, Albuquerque, 2018 State Champion, Poetry Out Loud Recitation Competition

## PARTNERS IN OUR VISION



recognize and promote achievements in the arts

- Honor the achievements and contributions of New Mexico artists, arts organizations, and arts supporters through the Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts.
- Nominate New Mexico artists for regional and national awards and fellowships (e.g., National Heritage Fellows, Leaders of Color Fellowship, etc.).
- Celebrate student achievement with the annual POL state finals, and the Poetry Ourselves poetry writing contest.
- Continue ongoing collaboration with the New Mexico Scholastic Student Art Competition to recognize an outstanding student visual artist in our POL promotional materials.





## goal 3

# effectively communicate the value of public funding for the arts

As a statewide agency, NMA is positioned to conduct research, distill information, and serve as a resource to New Mexico's arts and culture field.

**AT LEFT** Native Basketry Workshop, 2015, Folk & Traditional Arts Program

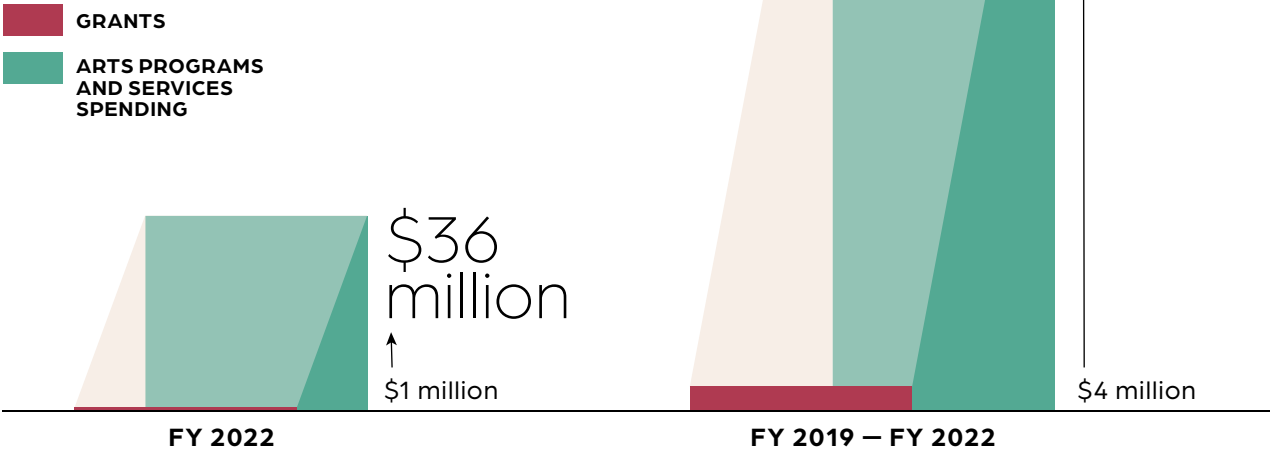
**AT RIGHT** Santero José Benjamín López, Española





RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In FY22, New Mexico Arts helped grantees leverage \$1 million of funding into \$36 million in arts program and services spending. Over four years, a total of \$4 million has been leveraged into \$141 million in spending.



advocate for new mexico's arts and culture sector

- Foster legislative awareness of the importance of the arts to the cultural, educational, and economic impact in the lives of all New Mexicans
- Work with DCA's legislative liaison and national/regional/state advocacy organizations to build legislative support for NMA programs in accordance with Executive guidance.
- Seek expertise in identifying potential revisions to rules, laws, and processes that hinder efforts to reduce or remove barriers to participation.
- Work with Creative New Mexico, New Mexico's state arts advocacy organization, to deliver strong statewide arts advocacy with citizen advocates at the center
- Work with the New Mexico Arts Commission and New Mexico Arts Foundation to develop advocacy efforts that strengthen NMA's work

grow new mexico's arts and culture sector through research

- Expand analysis of grant application, final report, and other data to gain deeper insights into the shifting capacities of arts organizations.
- Collect and analyze local level data to inform NMA's work through survey tools for grantees, public art recipients, public artists, general arts sector, etc.
- Continue ethnographic fieldwork in communities and with traditional artists; lay the groundwork for a publicly accessible archive.
- Increase use of advocacy partners to obtain and distribute meaningful data: Creative New Mexico, WESTAF, NASAA, AFTA, and DCA legislative liaison.
- Track and share new regional and national policies and legislative initiatives on communications platforms and with advocacy partners.

actively promote new mexico arts' work as the state's arts agency

- Communicate New Mexico Arts' overall identity as New Mexico's federally recognized state arts agency and convey community impact of programs
- Work with DCA communications team to collect and publish innovative and inspiring stories and testimonials from the sector about projects and programs supported by NMA
- Ensure consistent messaging across all NMA programs and projects.
- Create a user-friendly and well-designed website that is easy for NMA to update and maintain.

ABOVE Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Folklorico students performing





## goal 4

### align agency to support strategic goals

New Mexico Arts has identified strategies to increase collective impact and deepen our service to the field through the realignment of staff responsibilities and expanded partnership opportunities.

**AT LEFT** Elisabeth and Mark Horst, T.I.M.E Cibola, 2016

**AT RIGHT** Compañía Chuscales y Mina Fajardo  
principal dancer, Sveta Backhaus







## assess agency staffing to increase capacity for service to the field

- Evaluate division's functional needs to meet the goals of the strategic plan and conduct a gap analysis to identify the short- and long-term staffing needs.
- Address identified challenges impeding the agency's recruitment and retention efforts.
- Consider short term staffing as appropriate to include interns, contractors, and/or temps.

## support professional development for staff members

- Work with staff to identify appropriate and engaging professional development trainings and workshops.
- Seek opportunities for staff networking with local, regional, and national peers.
- Ensure all staff (program, fiscal, and admin) participate in site visits to the field to experience first-hand the impacts of our work.
- Encourage staff participation in programs and events within DCA to foster connection and collaboration at the department level.

**ABOVE** The Paseo Project, Taos, "Create a Space" by Twirl Taos, 2022

SERVICE TO THE FIELD | FY2023

educational opportunities provided

38

Folk Art apprenticeships  
Workshops and peer sessions

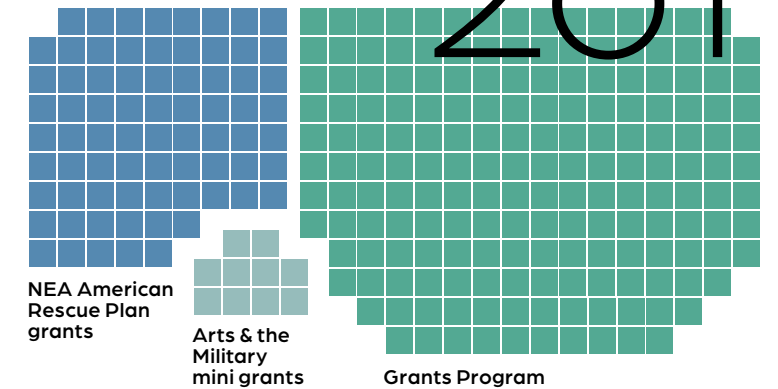
works of art acquired

95

28,000  
staff contacts with the field

grants awarded

261



## expand collective impact in the arts and culture sector

- Expand strategic partnerships with local, regional, and national arts and non-arts entities to support the field.
- Participate in DCA's intra-departmental working groups to bring NMA's statewide perspective and expertise; identify potential long-term partnerships or program opportunities with other DCA divisions.

- Strengthen partnerships with the Economic Development Department on the Arts and Cultural Districts program and explore innovative partnership opportunities with the newly established Creative Industries Division.
- Identify new inter-departmental partnerships to tap into existing funding sources and distribution models to realize greater collective impact.



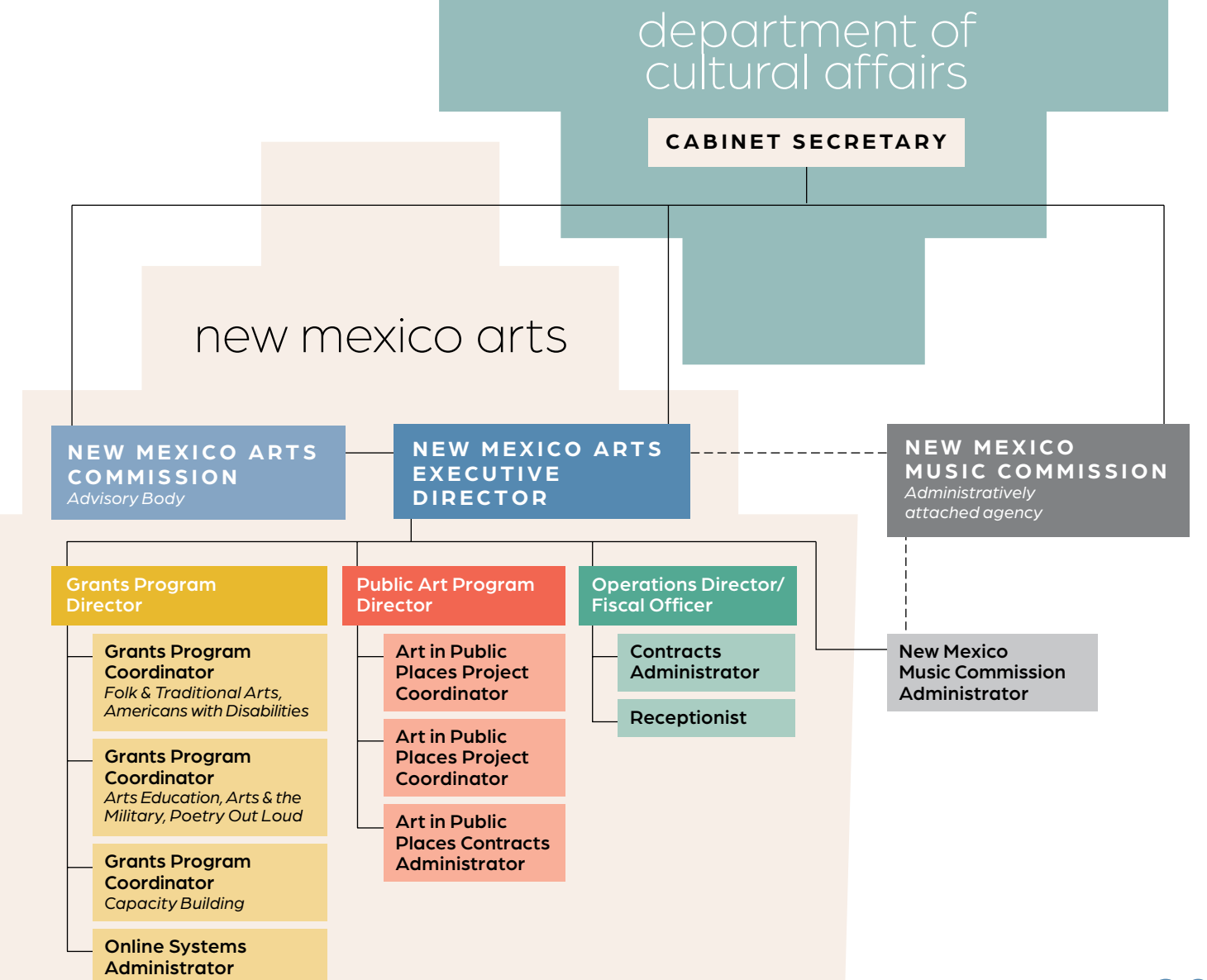


## new mexico arts programs

- ▶ Art in Public Places
- ▶ Cultural Investment Program/Grants
- ▶ Folk & Traditional Arts
- ▶ Arts Education
- ▶ Arts & the Military
- ▶ Poetry Out Loud
- ▶ Rural Artist in Residence Program
- ▶ Professional Development Training for Artists
- ▶ Organizational Capacity Building for Arts Organizations
- ▶ Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts
- ▶ New Mexico Arts Commission
- ▶ Arts and Cultural Districts (in partnership with the Economic Development Department's Main Street Program)
- ▶ Poet Laureate Program (in partnership with the State Library)
- ▶ New Mexico Music Commission (administratively attached agency)

**ABOVE** Clovis Community College Cultural Arts Series, Cirque Mei performance at Marshall Auditorium, 2019

## organizational structure







# guide to acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ACD    | Arts and Cultural District   |
| ADA    | Americans with Disabilities Act  |
| AFTA   | Americans for the Arts   |
| AEP 6  | Arts and Economic Prosperity 6   |
| AIPP   | Art in Public Places   |
| DCA    | Department of Cultural Affairs   |
| FY     | Fiscal Year  |
| LAA    | Local Arts Council   |
| NASAA  | National Assembly of State Arts Agencies   |
| NEA    | National Endowment for the Arts  |
| NMA    | New Mexico Arts  |
| POL    | Poetry Out Loud  |
| RAO    | Regional Arts Organization   |
| SAA    | State Arts Agency  |
| WESTAF | Western States Arts Federation, one of the six regional arts organizations in the US |

**ABOVE** "Into the Woods JR" by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, A Children's Theatre of the Mesilla Valley 2022, photo by Luis Castro

**AT RIGHT** gallupARTS, artist Rylan Becenti at Loom gallery in Gallup, photo by Dawna Walters

# acknowledgments

Many thanks to our national and regional partners (NEA, WESTAF, AFTA, NASAA), SAA colleagues, NMA and DCA staff, DCA Cabinet Secretary Debra Garcia y Griego, and all the constituents and community partners across the state who participated in our interviews, surveys, and feedback sessions. We are also grateful to NMA grant recipients for photographs of their work that were used in the plan.

Much appreciation to our consultants: SVPratt Creative Strategies consulted on the strategic planning and Firestik Studio provided the graphic design.







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