

**Americans for the Arts Action Fund (AFTAAF)
50 States 50 Days – a National Arts Initiative**

**Summary Sheet Prepared by Florida Cultural Alliance
from Materials from AFTAAF -- June 2010**

A. Goal: Encourage local arts-advocacy events or meetings at local art venues, performances, museums, or exhibitions with a discussion at each event or meeting on three (3) federal-arts-policy issues in all 50 states in as many Congressional districts as possible from July 31, 2010, through September 18, 2010, and promote these events/meetings.

B. Purposes are to:

- (1) Engage and educate local congressional district staff on national arts-related issues;
- (2) Identify new arts advocates and mobilize all arts advocates to engage;
- (3) Reinforce the roles of the Florida Cultural Alliance and local arts agencies as arts-and-cultural resources for Florida's members of Congress and their staff members.

C. Key Policy Discussion Topics at Local Advocacy Events/Meetings:

(1) National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) – Support for the NEA, specifically Challenge America which reaches hundreds of communities, and the NEA's Our Town proposal. This issue could include discussion on the local creative economy, community development, artists as entrepreneurs, civic engagement, cultural districts, etc.

(2) Arts Education – Support for increased funding for the Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education and strengthening arts education in the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA, or No Child Left Behind Act). To promote arts education at the local level, the advocacy event/meeting could take place at a school, arts education service partner, company that employs artists or uses creative skills, a visit to an arts education class or performance, etc.

(3) Artist-Museum Partnership Act – Need to increase co-sponsorship support for this legislation and highlight local relevance. This issue was selected because of the immediate relevance to local museums and artists.

D. Event Formats – Three types of event formats are suggested in priority order:

1st Priority for Event Format: (1) **Congressional-member Hosted EVENT** – each Congressional member would agree to actually host the event to demonstrate the highest level of commitment and support to the arts community. **OR (2) Congressional-member Hosted MEETING** – If the Congressional member is not available to attend an arts event/federal arts policy discussion or host this event, then he or she might be willing

to meet with local arts leaders to discuss the three federal-arts-policy issues in his or her district office during the August Congressional recess.

2nd Priority for Event Format: (1) Non-Profit Hosted Event – local arts leaders invite the Congressional member to take part in a discussion on the three federal arts policy topics at one or more arts events during July 31 to September 18. These invitations would only be for current members of Congress, not Congressional candidates. **OR (2) Non-Profit Invitation** – identify an arts agency leader or trustee of an institution to invite the Congressional member to an arts event if he/she is not available to participate in an organized local arts-advocacy event where the three federal arts-policy issues are discussed.

3rd Priority for Event Format: Political – Nonprofit Hosts Forum – coordinate a political event and invite the candidates for congressional office to attend.

E. Resources To Help Plan and Coordinate These Local-Arts-Advocacy Events/Meetings: Americans for the Arts Action Fund will provide the following:

1. Toolkit with

- a. Customizable press release
- b. Issue briefs on NEA, Arts Education, and Artists-Museum Partnership Act
- c. One-page research briefs on Challenge America, Arts Education benefits and creative industries
- d. Instructions on how to build local event and request Congressional meeting(s).
- e. Customizable leave-behind piece
- f. List of 50 activities that could be undertaken during the 50 days.

2. Americans for the Arts Action Fund Website

- a. Website will include toolkit, map of participating locations, and sharing of media (pictures and video).
- b. Each participating location will be able to set up a dedicated page within this Website with the ability to share event details and communications and upload materials.

3. Targeting

- a. Interested in the development of local arts-advocacy events/meetings in all 25 Florida Congressional districts and events or meetings with Florida's two U.S. Senators; however, the AFTA AF only identified two U.S. Florida Representatives as critical to this national initiative: Representatives Kendrick Meek (D-17) (<http://kendrickmeek.house.gov/>) who represents parts of Broward and Miami-Dade counties and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-18) (<http://ros-lehtinen.house.gov/>) who represents parts of Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, both are members of Ways and Means and the Congressional Arts Caucus.