



WASHINGTON STATE
ARTS COMMISSION



February 8, 2017

The Honorable John Braun, Chair, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Sharon Brown, Vice-Chair, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Dino Rossi, Vice-Chair, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Kevin Ranker, Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Christine Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Timm Ormsby, Chair, House Appropriations
The Honorable June Robinson, Vice-Chair, House Appropriations
The Honorable Bruce Chandler, Ranking Member, House Appropriations
The Honorable Drew MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Member, House Appropriations

RE: Arts Commission and Humanities Washington 2017-19 Operating Budget Requests – Small Appropriations That Would Pay Big Dividends

Dear Sens. Braun, Brown, Rossi, Ranker, & Rolfes; and Reps. Ormsby, Robinson, Chandler, & MacEwen:

We are writing to you as the citizen Chairman of the Washington State Arts Commission and Executive Director of Humanities Washington to convey an arts community request for the 2017-19 Operating Budget.

Our request involves a total of \$160,000 for the biennium for the vital, popular Speaker's Bureau and Trade/Folk Arts Apprenticeship programs. We hope that you will also consider restoring most of the \$655,000 in cuts made to the Arts Commission ("ArtsWA") portion of the Governor's Operating Budget proposal for grant investment funding in communities statewide as well as for the second, and final, portion of the biennial funding allowing completion of the "My Public Art Portal project."

A summary of our request is as follows:

SPEAKERS BUREAU: This program is run out of the Secretary of State's Office in collaboration with Humanities Washington. In 2007-09, before the Great Recession, the program was funded at \$45,000 per year. We are requesting \$50,000 per year (\$100,000 for the biennium) for this program, which is particularly helpful to and well-used by rural communities of our state. We have attached an overview of this program, of which the Secretary of State is very supportive.

Request: \$100,00 GF-S – Include in Secretary of State's Office portion of budget bill

FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM: This program is run through the Center for Washington Cultural Traditions, a collaboration of ArtsWA, Humanities Washington, and Northwest Heritage Resources. We are seeking \$60,000 for the biennium – a wise investment since it would trigger an additional \$60,000 in matching federal funds. This important program pairs master practitioners, many of whom are elderly and at the end of their careers, with apprentices seeking to learn their craft. The program ensures that diverse voices, many of whom are not found in traditional settings such as museums and cultural centers, are showcased for the benefit of the greater community. As with the Speakers Bureau, it will enable even greater reach into the rural parts of our state. We've attached a 1-pager that explains program parameters and benefits.

Request: \$60,000 GF-S – Include in Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) portion of budget

ARTS WA BUDGET CUTS

Lastly, we ask for your consideration restoring the \$655,000 in cuts that disproportionately impacted the Arts Commission part of the budget far more than it did most other agencies, given the heavy reliance on matching federal grant dollars. ArtsWA was told that in many respects, its budget information and particulars “fell through the cracks.”

Understanding the significant issues with which you are all grappling, we would ask for restoration of as much of the cut to the ArtsWA budget as possible, understanding its impact on the agency grant investment capabilities as well as the positive outcome of an on-time completion of the “My Public Art Portal.” With respect to the latter, funding for the Portal was just approved (2015), and you asked at that time, that the Commission complete it within two biennia. We've attached a Jan. 4 letter we sent to the Governor and copied to Senate and House budget-writers.

Request: \$655,000 GF-S – Include in Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) portion of budget

In closing, we want to express our appreciation for your consideration for this request and for the work you do on behalf of the State of Washington. We are working with Doug Levy and David Foster on these budget issues through the Western States Arts Federation and Humanities Washington – so you likely will hear in the coming weeks from Doug and David as well as from Board Members of our respective organizations.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Bassem A. Bejjani, M.D., Chairman
ArtsWA Board of Commissioners



Julie Ziegler, Executive Director
Humanities Washington