



## 2024 Candidate Arts Survey Responses

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### Zach Mellender

District: **8**

Candidate's Website: [mellenderforregent.com](http://mellenderforregent.com)

The State of Nebraska has content area standards in the fine arts, which include media arts, visual arts, dance, music, and theatre. How important do you think it is for students to have access to arts education courses?

*(essential, high priority, medium priority, low priority, not a priority)*

Essential

Are you aware of an agency of state government – the Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) – whose mission is to support the arts, humanities and creative activities in Nebraska?

*(very aware, moderately aware, slightly aware, not aware)*

Very Aware

In FY2023-24, the Nebraska Arts Council invested \$2.6 million in state general appropriations in grants and services across the state to support arts programs and access, arts education programs, and supporting local arts councils and organizations. Most grant dollars required a 1:1 match from private sources. Which statement below best reflects your view?

*(Increase in state funding, receive the same amount, decrease in state funding, no opinion at this time)*

The NAC should receive an increase in state funding in the coming fiscal year.

What is the impact level of having a vibrant and active creative arts culture in Nebraska in enticing and keeping high school and college/university graduates to stay in the state after they graduate? *(high impact, moderate impact, slight impact, no impact)*

High Impact

**U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector contributed \$3.6 billion to Nebraska's economy in 2022, representing 2.21% of the state's GDP, 31,228 jobs, and total compensation of \$2.1 billion. How important do you feel state appropriations and policies to advance Nebraska's creative industries (including arts, cultural, historical, humanities, science, and arts education resources) are in relation to creating a strong economic future for Nebraska?** *(very important, moderately important, slightly important, not at all important)*

Very Important

**Nebraska adults have one of the highest participation rate in the U.S. in annually attending an art exhibit or arts performance. Is there a specific arts or culture organization in your part of the state that you or your family particularly enjoy, or do you have an artistic talent or hobby?** *(yes, no)*

Yes

**If yes, please list your talent/hobby and your favorite arts organization(s) here:**

I have participated in performing arts and humanities since elementary school. I very much enjoy patronizing Omaha Performing Arts and their various shows.

I'm also a veteran Junior Classical League student- competing in classical Latin at the state and national levels. The humanities have been incredibly impactful in my own formation.

There are countless other fantastic organizations that contribute to our culture and society- too many to name here. It's been so rewarding seeing my children fall in love with musicals and artwork as I did.

**Additional Comments from the candidate:**

STEM is so important in school today. However, I think that we do ourselves a disservice when we forget the arts and humanities, which is why I strongly advocate for STEAM at all levels of education.