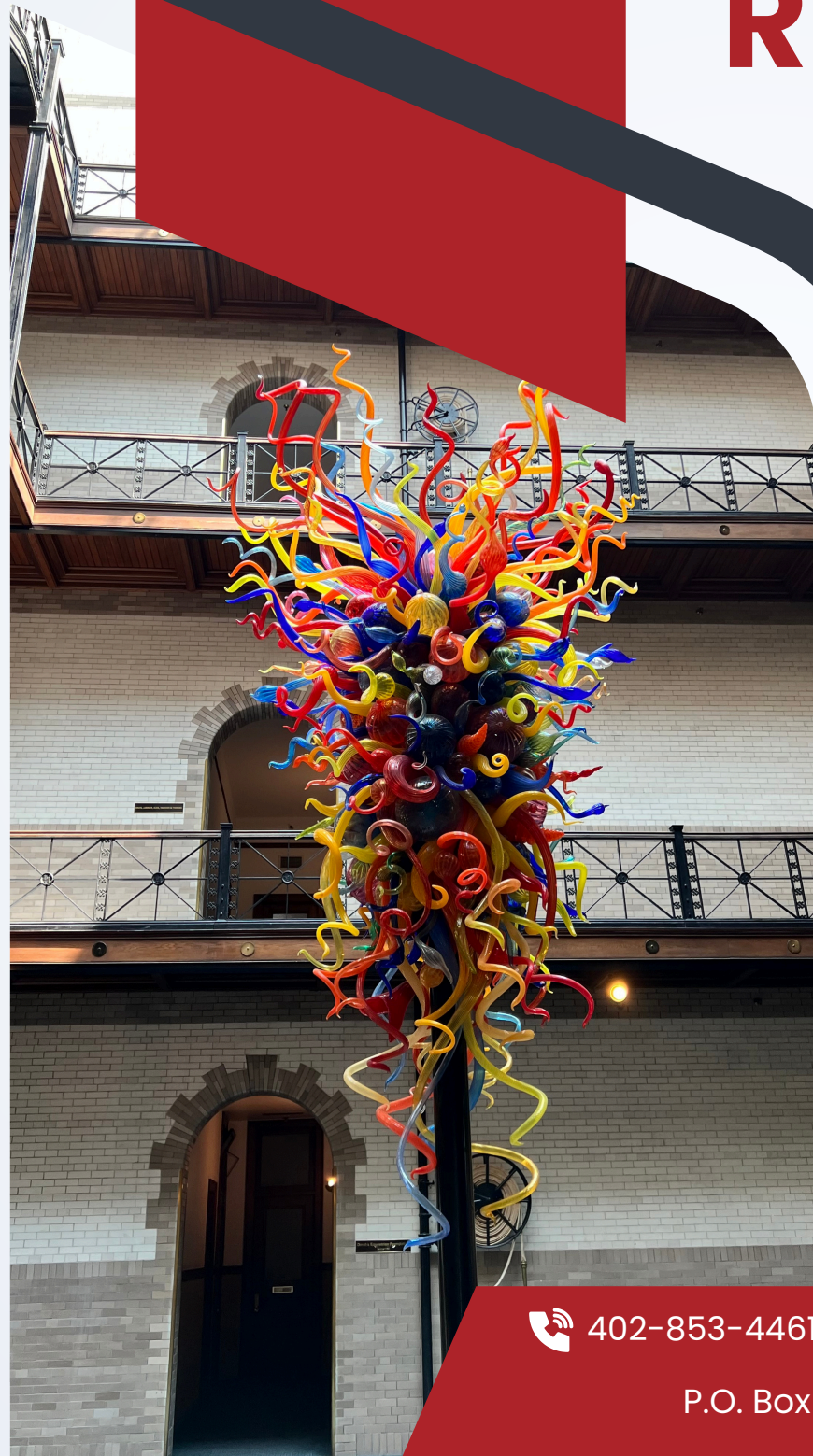


NEBRASKANS  
FOR THE  
**ARTS**

# 2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT



402-853-4461



[info@nebraskansforthearts.org](mailto:info@nebraskansforthearts.org)

P.O. Box 8517 Omaha, NE 68108



# WELCOME MESSAGE

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Dear Friends,

Welcome, and thank you for being a part of Nebraskans for the Arts. We are celebrating our 40th year of arts advocacy. Whether you're a new member or a long-standing supporter, your presence in our community is more vital than ever. As the statewide arts advocacy organization, Nebraskans for the Arts works every day to ensure that arts and culture remain a vibrant, accessible, and essential part of life in Nebraska. We champion public funding for the arts, advocate for arts education in our schools, and help elevate the voices of artists, educators, and cultural organizations across the state. We engage with policymakers, foster public awareness, and build coalitions to make sure the value of the arts is both seen and heard.

And now, during these unprecedented times, when arts and culture are facing renewed challenges and increased scrutiny, our work has never been more urgent. The landscape is shifting rapidly, and we must stand united to defend and uplift the creative spirit that enriches every community in our state.

That's where your membership matters. Your support strengthens our voice, expands our reach, and fuels the advocacy, education, and outreach efforts that make real change possible. Together, we are more than individual artists, educators, organizations, or patrons, we are a movement for the arts in Nebraska.

Thank you for believing in this work. Thank you for being part of it.  
We're glad you're here.

With gratitude,  
Lance Nielsen  
Executive Director  
Nebraskans for the Arts





# PROFILE

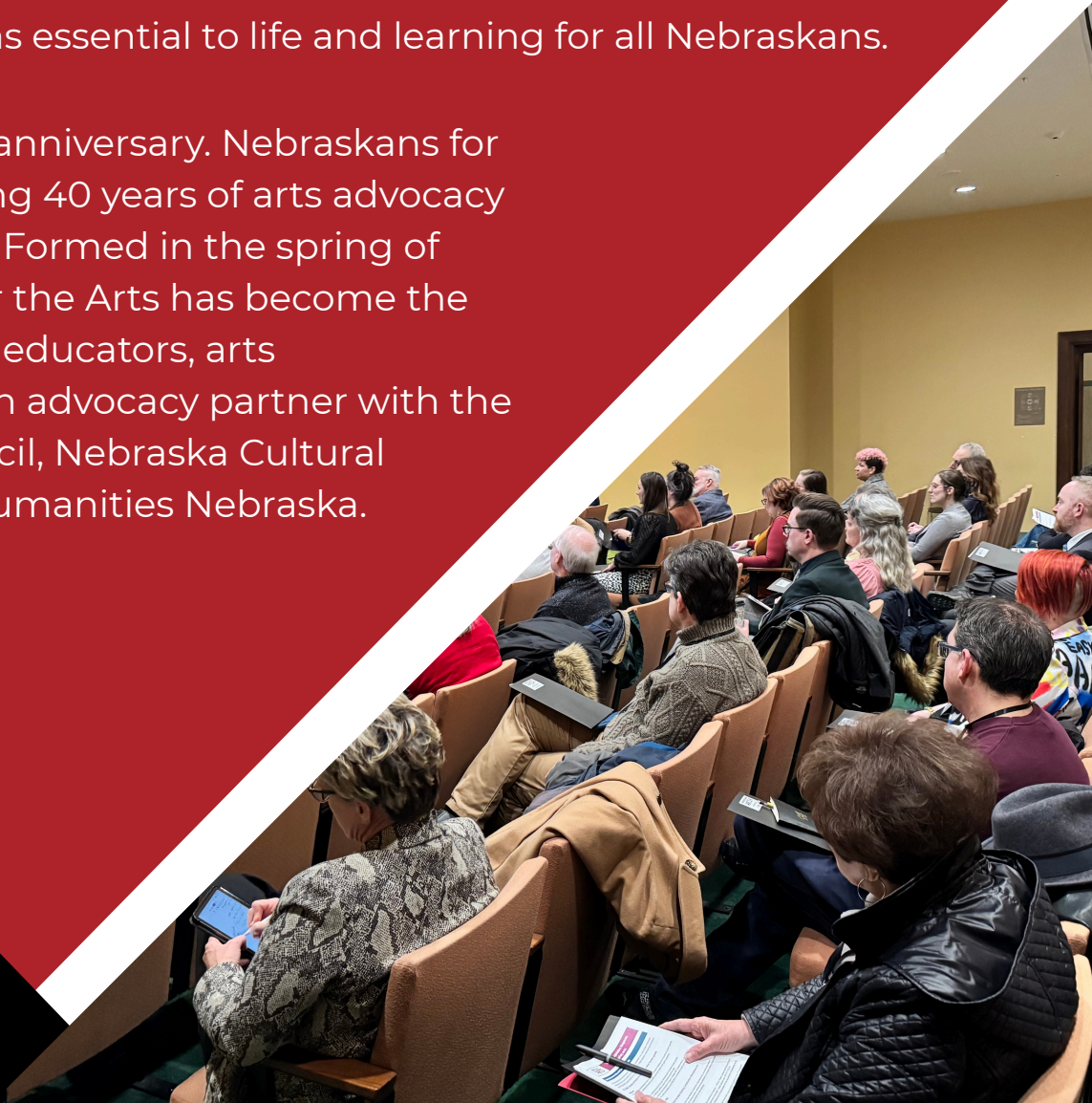
**Nebraskans for the Arts (NFTA) is your arts advocacy organization.**

Representing arts organizations and individual members across the state, NFTA advises policy makers, elected officials, and community leaders on the importance of strong arts education in our schools, the economic impact of the arts in our communities, and the benefits of pro-arts policies for Nebraska.

## **Mission**

Advancing the arts as essential to life and learning for all Nebraskans.

This is our 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Nebraskans for the Arts is celebrating 40 years of arts advocacy this upcoming year. Formed in the spring of 1985, Nebraskans for the Arts has become the voice for artists, arts educators, arts organizations and an advocacy partner with the Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Humanities Nebraska.



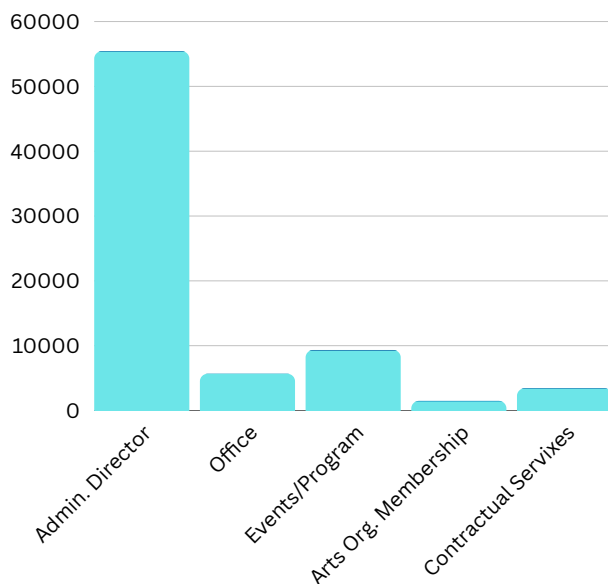
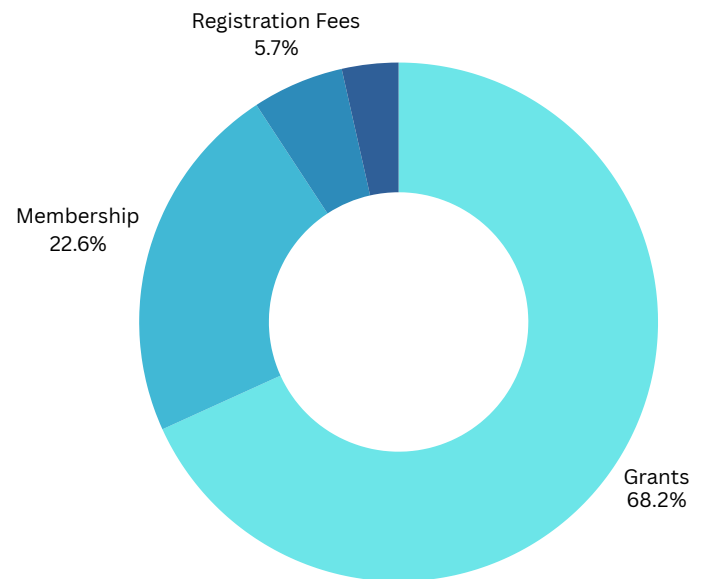
# SNAPSHOT FINANCIAL POSITION

## Fiscal Year 2024-25

Nebraskans for the Arts operates on a small budget. Our Net Asset at the end of the fiscal year was \$31,973.87. Fiscal Year, July 1, 2024, June 30, 2025.

## Public Support and Revenue

Grants	\$54,058.00
Memberships	\$17,854.14
Donations	\$2,789.55
Registrations AAD	\$4,521.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$79,223.09</b>



## Expenses

Admin. Director Expenses	\$55,411.35
Events / Programs	\$ 9,322.28
Office Expenditures	\$ 5,649.23
Arts Organization Memberships	\$ 1,459.62
Contractual Services	\$ 3,392.99
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$75,235.47</b>



# 24-25

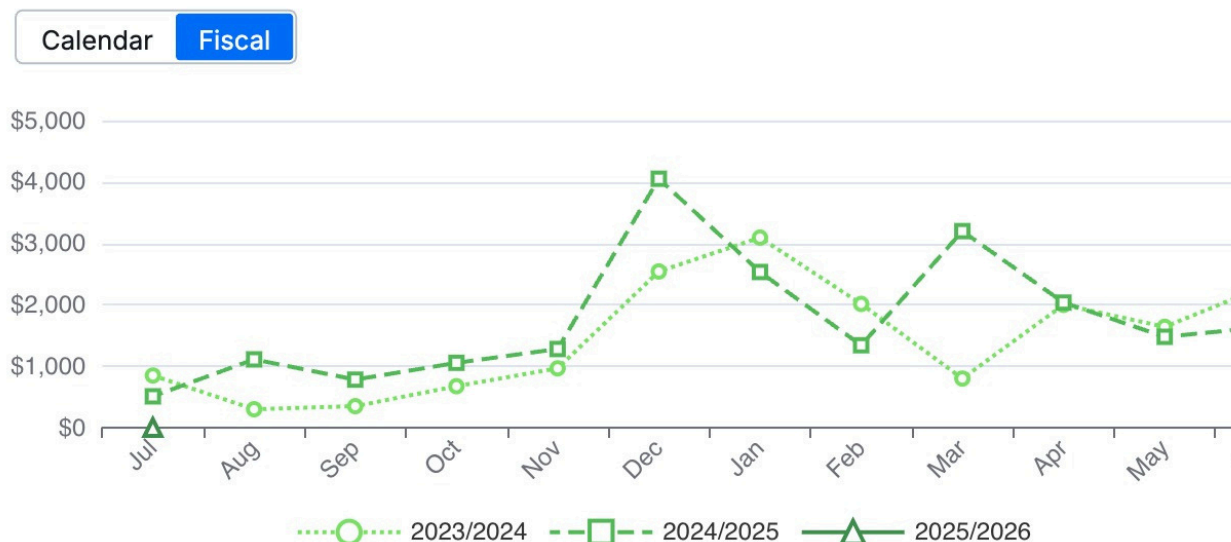
## MEMBERSHIP

The NFTA Membership Committee established a goal to increase membership by 10% for FY24-25. That goal was met with an increase of 18%.

Memberships			
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Last Year</u>
Individual	50	70	47
Friend	30	20	31
Sponsor	15	16	11
Patron	10	11	6
Benefactor	3	4	3
BSG Org.	30	33	32
ASE Org.	18	8	12
Organization/Association	3	5	4
Creative Districts	8	8	3
Donations / Student	3	7	5
Total	170	182	154



Total Raised by Month, Year over Year



# ARTS ADVOCACY

## Nebraska Arts Action Fund

Established in 2011, this small 501(c)(4) serves as an affiliated organization to the Nebraskans for the Arts. The Nebraska Arts Action Fund's goal is to engage citizens in education and advocacy to support the arts and provide more political support when needed. We want to ensure that public policies are arts-friendly and that public and private resources are maximized.



## Nebraska Arts Advocacy Network and Action Center



**NEBRASKANS  
FOR THE  
ARTS**

[My Elected Officials](#) [Issues](#) [Take Action](#) [Log an Interaction](#) [Become a Member of NFTA](#)


### Steps to being an Arts Advocate for Nebraska

1. Register to be on the Nebraska Arts Advocacy Network.
2. Review the resources and issues provided on this homepage.
3. Participate in Action Alerts by contacting your elected officials.
4. Continue to develop positive connections with your elected officials all year long. When the legislature is not in session, meet with them in person. This is how we build arts allies.
5. Log your interactions by clicking on the *Log An Interaction* Tab on the above header bar. This is great data for NFTA.
6. Be a member of Nebraskans for the Arts, 501(c)(3) and/or donate to the Nebraska Arts Action Fund, 501(c)(4). We are your arts advocacy organization for the State of Nebraska.

Together, we can make a difference.



### FEDERAL UPDATES



**BREAKING NEWS UPDATES TIMELINE**

### NFTA Advocacy Network Action Center Registration Form

The Nebraska Arts Advocacy Network (NAAN) is a grassroots coalition of arts administrators, arts educators, artists, and arts enthusiasts committed to advocating for arts and culture across the state of Nebraska.

Nebraskans for the Arts believes that *in order for advocacy to be effective, it must be sustained year-round*. NAAN members further this idea by building relationships with their state senators, working together to resolve issues in their communities' arts sectors, and recruiting their friends and colleagues to engage in arts advocacy efforts.

Fields with an asterisk (\*) are required.

First Name *	Last Name *
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address *	Email *
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number *	
<input type="text"/>	

Thank you for joining our campaign. By providing your mobile phone number you consent to receive recurring text messages from our organization. Message & Data Rates May Apply. Text HELP for Info. Text STOP to opt out. No purchase necessary.

NAAN members help champion the idea of sustained advocacy efforts by building relationships with their state senators, working together to resolve issues in their communities' arts sectors, and recruiting their friends and colleagues to engage in arts advocacy efforts.

In partnership with Americans for the Arts, NFTA is utilizing a new bill tracking and Action Alert system called Quorum. This new tool is used to communicate with our NAAN members and NFTA Board Members when key aspects of legislation impacting the arts needs action.

# ARTS ADVOCACY

## Federal

The arts and arts education has witnessed unprecedented times this spring. Grant rescissions and funding and staffing cuts with the National Endowment for Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities has had ripple effects.

NFTA has conducted various Action Alerts engaging advocates to write and call their elected officials. NFTA also engaged in with both virtual Zoom meetings and in person meetings at local U.S. Senator and Congressman offices.

In June and July, Dr. Lance Nielsen, Executive Director, was in Washington D.C. meeting with all of our elected officials and legislative staff. Conversations were about saving funding for NEA and NEH and Arts Education, ESSA Title I, IIA, IIIA, IVA.



## State

LB 445 was added as an Amendment to LB660 and passed

- Originally, LB 445 repealed 1% for Art, but an amendment kept the program with some minor changes. GOOD NEWS that we were able to maintain 1% for Art!

Amendment 1300 to LB264

- Sweeps \$3 million from CCCFF cash fund; this was grant funding supporting Creative Districts.
- Paused \$1 million state match to NCE for 2 years.

LB 261

- The legislature passed a biennial budget. Nebraska Arts Council saw a slight increase in operating costs. We take it as a win that there were no cuts, but a request for an additional \$1 million did not occur.

LB 560

- More GOOD NEWS, this bill was championed by Senator George Dungan, and it opens up \$500,000 in Grants for Creative Districts.





# NEBRASKARTS AWARD

## 2024-2025 NebraskARTS Awards Winner



**O'Neill Public  
Schools**

NEBRASKANS  
FOR THE  
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2025-26 NebraskARTS Award nomination application is now open. The deadline is October 17, 2025.

Go to the NFTA website to nominate a school today.

Each year, Nebraskans for the Arts honors two Nebraska schools or school districts that have supported and encouraged achievement in the media arts, visual arts, dance, music, or theatre. This year, we recognized O'Neill Public Schools and Osmond Community Schools.

## 2024-2025 NebraskARTS Awards Winner



**Osmond Community  
Schools**

NEBRASKANS  
FOR THE  
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# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Poetry OutLoud

NFTA helps sponsor POL 25 along with Nebraska Arts Council in March.

The new state champ is Lainey Fillmore (Gordon-Rushville High School). The first runner-up is MajieAhna Winfrey (Marian High School) and the second runner-up is Mieke van der Walt (Burwell High School).



## Arts Advocacy Day



The NFTA Arts Advocacy Day was held on February 19, 2025. Although the weather was not cooperative this year, we had at least half of the registrants able to attend to be engaged in advocacy training, conversations with our state senators, and break out sessions with arts education and creative districts. We were excited to have Jewel Rodgers, new Nebraska State Poet join us for our morning sessions.

## Webinars / Workshops

NFTA sponsored a workshop by Simone Cottrell, **Art, Protest, & The Supreme Court.**

It covered our Constitutional Rights as creatives, two arts + protest-related cases that were argued at the Supreme Court, and how Kendrick Lamar's 2025 Superbowl Halftime performance could be used as a blueprint for artivism using the arts.

Danielle Laurion and Cody Talarico presented arts education workshops across the state of Nebraska.

NFTA also presented two advocacy webinars this last spring. The May webinar specifically gave updates on NEA and NEH cuts and advocacy efforts.



### SIMONE COTTRELL

- Workshop Instructor
- +10 years of experience in grant writing, reviewing panelist for regional and national arts & culture grants, and nonprofit administration
- Previous Clients: Smithsonian Institute, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Arkansas Arts Council

Sponsored by:  
**NEBRASKANS  
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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## **President**

Steve Barth, Crane River Theater | Kearney

## **President-elect**

Danielle Laurion, Omaha South High School/UNO | Omaha

## **Secretary**

Judy Bush, Retired Music Educator | Lincoln

## **Treasurer**

Nancy Engen-Wedin Lied Center for Performing Arts | Lincoln

## **Vice President of Arts Education**

Danielle Laurion, Omaha South High School/UNO | Omaha

## **Vice President of Legislation**

Matthew Boring, Lied Center for Performing Arts | Lincoln

## **Vice President of Membership and Marketing**

Kara Weander-Gaster, Director of Norfolk River Point Creative District | Norfolk

## **At-Large Members**

Bronwyn Bahr, Special Projects Administrator, Omaha Performing Arts | Omaha

Cassie Ehrenberg, Iron Horse Arts Creative District | Holdrege

Jason Fischer, Surreal Media Lab | Omaha

Darrel Huenergardt, Huenergardt Law Office | Lincoln

Daniel Martinez, Musician | Lincoln

Nathan Murray, LUX Center for the Arts | Lincoln

John Paul, Community Liaison Manager, Joslyn Castle and  
Castle & Cathedral Creative District | Omaha

Lorinda Rice, Lincoln Public Schools Visual Art Curriculum Specialist | Lincoln

Heather Stahr, Music Educator and Counselor, McCool Junction Public Schools | Utica

Mel Voorhis, Associate Artistic Director, Beatrice Community Players | Beatrice

Cody Talarico, Ex-officio, Nebraska Department of Education

Mike Markey, Ex-officio, Nebraska Arts Council



# NEBRASKANS FOR THE ARTS

Thank you for your support of  
Nebraskans for the Arts and  
your advocacy for arts  
and arts education.

Please don't forget to renew  
your membership this year.

Together, we can make a  
difference and we need each  
other now more than ever.

*Governor's Proclamation Recognizing  
Nebraskans for the Arts 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



402-853-4461



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