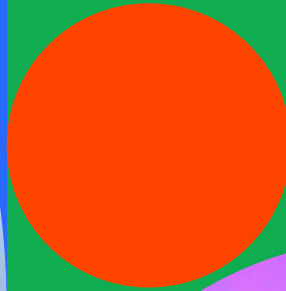


NEBRASKANS FOR THE ARTS



2026

ANNUAL REPORT

www.nebraskansforthearts.org

Published July 10, 2026

Dear Arts Advocates,

Thank you for your continued support of Nebraskans for the Arts and for your commitment to advancing the arts as essential to life and learning in Nebraska. This annual report reflects a year of advocacy, partnership, and progress made possible by artists, educators, cultural leaders, and supporters across our state.

During 2025–26, Nebraskans for the Arts worked to protect the Cultural Preservation Endowment Fund, advocate for continued federal support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and arts education, advanced Theater Education certification standards in Nebraska, and prepared for America 250 through arts education lesson plans developed by our Education Committee. We were also proud to sponsor and commission 500 Mile Sculpture Garden: Memorial to the American Bandshell, a new community band commission celebrating Nebraska's cultural landscape.

This work is only possible because of dedicated arts advocates across Nebraska who continue to speak up, show up, and support the arts in their communities. Thank you for your partnership and for helping ensure the arts remain visible, valued, and supported in our state.

With gratitude,

Dr. Lance Nielsen
Executive Director
Nebraskans for the Arts



**Don't Forget to Renew Your
NFTA Membership**



Year in Review

Nebraskans for the Arts rebranded our Arts Advocacy Day as **Arts and Culture Day at the Capitol**. It was an opportunity to celebrate the impact arts and culture have on our communities and share those important stories with our State Senators. It is also a great time to bring our arts advocates from across the state together in person.

● Advocacy

NFTA continued our advocacy with a Federal focus, submitting appropriations requests for NEA, NEH, IMLS, and Arts Education. At the state level, due to the state budget issues, our focus was on saving the Cultural Preservation Endowment Fund. Although we were able to avoid a complete sweep of the \$15 million public funds, we did see a sweep of \$5 million. Our efforts this fall and the next term will be on continued education of the importance of this important public / private partnership.

● Arts Education

The original Alliance of Arts Education organizations reorganized and reconnected across the country. Nebraska Alliance for Arts Education merged with NFTA in 1998 and is now our Arts Education Committee. That committee worked hard this year in developing an arts curriculum for K-12 educators that reflects the America 250 theme and the Sense of Belonging.

● America 250

NFTA collaborated with the Nebraska Arts Council in promoting the rededication of the I-80 Sculpture Garden. As a part of that project, NFTA commissioned Nebraska Composer Nolan Schmit to write a piece for community bands (more on page 6)



Financial Overview

Income Statement



Revenue

Total Revenue: \$100,988

Expenses

Total Expenses: \$81,022

Net Assest as of June 30, 2026

Net Asset: \$51,992.45

Balance Sheet

Public Support and Revenue

Grants	\$60,534
Memberships	\$22,623
Donations	\$1,635
Registrations AAD	\$3,308
Contractual Agreements	\$12,888
TOTAL	\$100,988

Expenses

Admin. Director Expenses	\$55,119
Events / Programs	\$9,067
Office Expenditures	\$8,727
Contractual Services & NFTA memberships	\$8,109
TOTAL:	\$81,022

Nebraskans for the Arts has expanded our fiscal capacity through membership engagement, increased donor and sponsorship support, and grant support. Your NFTA board is a good steward of the budget, keeping expenses within the ability to expand our organization to fiscal stability.

Membership Overview

NFTA Membership Growth

Membership/Donorship remains consistent. We did see more new members this year compared to past years. We saw a little downward trend for total members, but an increase in membership donation levels.

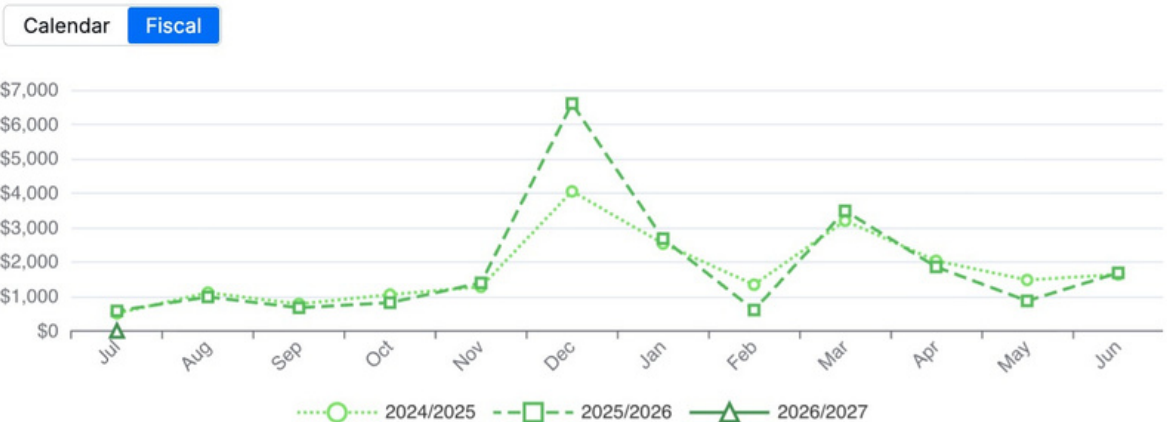
NFTA Memberships are active for 12 months from the date of membership renewal. Past members may renew at any time through the NFTA website.

Please consider inviting other people you may know to join our cause.

Memberships

	Goal	Actual	Last Year
Individual	60	52	70
Friend	25	24	20
Sponsor	15	21	16
Patron	10	11	11
Benefactor	3	4	4
BSG Org.	32	36	33
ASE Org.	15	9	8
Organization/Assoc	5	6	5
Creative Districts	10	8	8
Donations / Student	5	3	7
Total	180	174	182

Total Raised by Month, Year over Year



Highlights of the Year



Arts and Culture Day 2026

Nebraskans for the Arts rebranded our Arts Advocacy Day as Arts and Culture Day at the Capitol. It was an opportunity to celebrate the impact arts and culture have on our communities and share those important stories with our State Senators. It is also a great time to bring our arts advocates from across the state together in person.



Arts Advocacy Network Milestone

The NFTA Advocacy Network met our goal of having representatives from each of the 49 state legislative districts. The 306 active advocates help in messaging our arts policy requests.



Federal Level Advocacy

NFTA participated in two Americans for the Arts Fly-ins and two individual fly-ins to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. over the last year. The main focus was on NEA, NEH, IMLS Funding and Arts Education Initiatives as well as policies that have indirect impact on the arts sector.

NFTA Commissions new Concert Band Piece

The Nebraskans for the Arts has commissioned a new concert band work, **500 Mile Sculpture Garden: Memorial to the American Bandshell** by Nolan E. Schmt. This piece celebrates America 250 by honoring the unique connection between Nebraska's Interstate-80 Sculpture Garden and the long-standing American tradition of community band music, two forms of public art that have brought people together across the state for generations. Performed by community bands along the I-80 corridor, this Nebraska-composed work recognizes shared civic spaces, creative expression, and the enduring role of community art and music in telling the American story.

NebraskARTS Award Winners



Omaha South High School

Omaha, NE

Omaha South has a comprehensive arts pathway that empowers over 1,600 students each year through a wide range of courses that nurture creativity, collaboration, and cultural expression.



Holdrege Middle School

holdrege, NE

Teachers across disciplines collaborate to integrate artistic expression and creative thinking into core academic areas.

Looking Forward

● Strategic Plan 2027-2030

NFTA's current strategic plan will come to an end this year. We have accomplished almost all our goals. We will now look to the future in supporting arts and culture.

● Arts Supported Policies

NFTA will conduct five “Coffee, Listen, and Learn” gatherings across the state this fall in order to get input on developing our arts policy agenda for the future.

● Arts Vote 2026

NFTA is committed to educating our arts supporters on the importance of voting, voter registration, and candidate information. We provide information to help you, the voter, be better informed before election day.

Closing Remarks

As we look ahead, the future of the arts in Nebraska depends on all of us. Nebraskans for the Arts is strongest when artists, educators, cultural organizations, businesses, and community members stand together with a shared voice. By becoming a member, renewing your membership, or making a contribution, you help ensure that arts advocacy remains active, informed, and effective at every level of government.

Your voice matters. Build relationships with your elected officials, share the impact of the arts in your community, and tell the stories that demonstrate why creativity is essential to education, economic vitality, and quality of life. Every conversation, every partnership, and every act of advocacy helps strengthen our collective impact. Together, we are creating a Nebraska where the arts continue to inspire, connect, and enrich every community.



Board of Directors



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Danielle Laurion, Omaha South High School/UNO | Omaha

Past-President

Steve Barth, Crane River Theater | Kearney

Secretary

Mel Voorhis, Beatrice Community Players | Beatrice

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Vice President of Membership and Marketing

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Nathan Murray, The Union of Contemporary Art | Omaha

John Paul, Artist | Omaha

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

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Natalie Chandler, Ex officio, Nebraska Dept. of Ed.

Mike Markey, Ex officio, Nebraska Arts Council



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