



Summary: Making Sense of Federal Policy Series

Funder Briefing: 7

Date: April 24, 2025

Topic: [Making Sense of Federal Policy: Understanding What it Means for NJ: Arts](#)

Speakers: **Nadia Elokda**, Vice President and Program Director — Grantmakers in the Arts;
Vanessa Ramalho, Director of External Relations — ArtPride New Jersey;

HIGHLIGHTS

Grantmakers in the Arts – Nadia Elokda

- The cultural sector is experiencing a period of political retrenchment, which is critical to understand for effective advocacy and strategy.
- It's important to be organized and strategic amidst rapid changes in federal policy that affect access to cultural expression.
- Recent federal actions have aimed to reshape cultural funding, impacting entities like the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- **Impact of Funding Policy Changes**
 - Restricted funding for programs linked to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
 - Funding freezes and shifts in agency priorities towards more ideologically driven initiatives.
 - The January 27th federal grant freeze particularly affected DEI-linked programs, creating uncertainty for organizations dependent on such funding.
 - Layoffs across various cultural organizations.
 - Cultural organizations have lost funding, affecting their ability to serve diverse populations and maintain programming.
 - The elimination of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding has had widespread effects on library systems and cultural institutions nationwide.
 - These policies have led to self-censorship among artists and organizations concerned about potential repercussions from the government.
- **What Can Funders Do:**
 - Continue advocacy efforts while remaining aligned with missions, even amidst political pressures.
 - Understand legal rights and the distinction between gifts and contracts in grant-making to protect against potential challenges.
 - Supporting DEI initiatives remains legally permissible under current laws, particularly for 501(c)(3) organizations.
 - Adapt to changing policies while continuing to support DEI initiatives and cultural narratives.

- Leverage lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen responses to current challenges.

Additional Resources

- [NASAA Support Good Arts Advocacy](#)
- [Grantmakers in the Arts: Community Resources on the New Presidential Administration's Actions](#)

ArtPride New Jersey –Vanessa Ramalho

- Statewide art service organization, with a mission to promote, advance and advocate for arts as essential to the quality of life for the people of NJ. Largest art service organization in the state.
- **Community and Organizational Impact:**
 - NJ Council for Humanities funding was rescinded.
 - NJ State Council of Arts – regranting work has been impacted by funding loss.
 - 60% of NEA funding goes to small organizations and with cuts small and medium-sized organizations is particularly affected, as they often rely on federal funding for survival.
 - Impact to research, resources for low-income and underserved communities
 - Library resources around literacy, closure of libraries and the loss of programs that serve marginalized communities.
 - Erosion of community trust.
 - Fear of censorship and control of artistic expressions.
- **The Role of Philanthropy:**
 - Need for funders to collaborate to effectively advocate for the arts and cultural funding.
 - Provide unrestricted general operating support to allow organizations the flexibility to navigate these challenges.
 - Ongoing communication with organizations to understand their needs and challenges in real-time.
 - Engage in advocacy and support cross-sector collaboration to enhance resilience in the cultural sector.