

Art in State Buildings Program



Newport

The [Vermont Art in State Buildings program](#) is a public art program administered by the Vermont Arts Council that supports and promotes the work of Vermont artists in communities throughout the state. The program is designed to preserve and enrich the state's cultural landscape for its citizens and visitors. It is dedicated to enhancing public buildings and spaces by improving their character and the quality of our working environments.

How does the Art in State Buildings Program do this?

- 1) By engaging people in a civic dialogue.** The program emphasizes community and agency participation in the design process along with the artist and architect. Artists commissioned through the program spend many hours engaging with the community and having a dialogue about their values and priorities.
- 2) By benefitting Vermont's economy.** This program supports Vermont's creative economy. By commissioning artists, we also support the many businesses they work with – designers, engineers, electricians, insurance agents, hardware stores, art supply stores, lumberyards, etc.
- 3) By enhancing Vermont's public spaces.** By investing in Vermont's public spaces and making them special places for our citizens and visitors, we create attractions for visitors. Public art commemorates and memorializes people, places and events, adds beauty, and encourages us to step outside our daily lives – even if just for a moment.



Waterbury

Issues to address:

In the FY 14 & 15 Capital Budget Adjustment there are proposed changes to the statute language that would have significant negative impact on the program. The language changes include:

29 V.S.A. §43 is amended to read:

(c) Amounts in the fund shall be expended upon order of the council for acquisition or commissioning and installation of works of art and for administration, as provided in this chapter. The selection, budgeting, and purchase of works of art shall include costs for any necessary site preparation or improvements, decorative or landscape elements peripheral to the artwork, any associated services such as water, electricity or lighting, and any other costs associated with installation of works of art.

29 V.S.A. § 44 is amended to include:

d) No funds shall be transferred to the Art Acquisition Fund or otherwise expended in support of the Art in State Buildings Program by the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services except as under subsection (a) of this section.

Impact of the change:

29 V.S.A. §43 (c) Adding the cost of all **site work** listed above to the current art budget will

- 1) Strain the program's ability to meet the programs stated goals;
- 2) Limit the ability for artistic engagement;
- 3) Limit integration of diverse, high quality art into Vermont State Building infrastructure. (Likely be limited to only a few paintings or other very simple installations rather than be able to consider elements like sculptures, etc.);
- 4) Limit incentive for architectural integration or innovation.

The program has an annual cap of \$50,000 used in a maximum of two eligible building projects per year. Currently this budget pays for:

- administration
- artists finalist honorariums
- artist design fees,
- materials, frames, mats or pedestals necessary for proper presentation of work,
- artist labor & studio costs,
- travel & transportation of artworks to installation sites
- photography
- liability insurance for artists.

The Art in State Buildings Program budget has remained level since its establishment in 1988.

Recommendations:

The Vermont Arts Council seeks to strengthen the program and increase the impact of Vermont's investment in art in public spaces. Therefore, we recommend that no changes be made to the language in the statute for the **FY 14 Fiscal year. (As proposed in the FY14 & 15 Capital Budget Adjustment.)**

In light of ongoing discussions about the program and changes to the statute, the Arts Council instead recommends the following alterations to the statute:

Address the Budget and Program Cap:

- **§ 42. Definitions (9)** Raise the minimum project eligibility cap from 1 million to 2.5 million.
- **§ 44. Funds transfer for art (a)** Change project funding model from a \$50,000 funding cap to a 1% for art calculation based upon estimated construction costs.
- **§ 44a. Powers and duties of commissioner (2)** Remove the limit of 2 project sites per year and include all eligible projects that meet the requirements as outlined in statute and in the program guidelines and policies.
- **§ 44. Funds transfer for art (b)** Change the language of this section to read "\$30,000 of the funds allocated shall be available for use by the Council for the expenses of administering this chapter."

Note: According to the most recent survey of Public Art Programs conducted by Americans for the Arts, the average annual cost to administer public art programs in New England is \$130,208. Currently the Council administers approximately two projects per year with an average annual administrative cost of 10,000. The proposed alterations would allow an increase in the number of projects per year. The added expenses would need to be budgeted.

Address timing issue:

The Arts Council suggests that Buildings & General Services (BGS) consult with the Council to evaluate the 5-10 year plan for capital construction to address timing, planning and budgeting. By including all eligible projects, BGS, the Arts Council and the State should be able to plan for inclusion of art work in capital projects just as they plan for windows, doors etc.



Middlebury



St. Albans



Montpelier