

**Sunset Advisory Commission
Board and Commission Review
Vermont Arts Council**

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.

The Vermont Arts Council is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to cultivate and advance the arts and creativity throughout Vermont. A governing board of 18-21 trustees (including one member appointed by the governor) oversees the Council's work. The board of trustees and the Executive and Finance committees meet quarterly, with additional committee meetings scheduled as needed. Agendas and minutes are kept on the Vermont Arts Council Board website.

2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.

Board members may serve two three-year terms. Members do not receive a per diem.

Name	Term ending	Appointing Authority
Sabrina Brown	2024	Board election
Ed Clark	2023	Board election
Sean Clute	2026	Board election
Jo Sabel Courtney	2021	Board election
Greg Cutler	2024	Board election
Major Jackson	2024	Board election
Reeve Lindbergh	2021	Board election
Becky McMeekin	2022	Board election
Nicole Nelson	2021	Board election
Gail Nunziata	2021	Board election
Greg Paus	2022	Board election
Tony Pietricola	2022	Board election

Stephen Pite	2021	Governor
Greg Sargent	2022	Board election
Nick Sherman	2023	Board election
Edmond Strainchamps	2021	Board election
Yasmin Tayeby	2023	Board election

3. Provide an overview of the board or commission’s purpose.

The role of Trustees is to further the Council’s mission by participating actively in the following Board responsibilities and duties:

- Establish general policies which direct and guide all aspects of the Arts Council.
- Participate in fundraising activities.
- Participate in strategic planning for the organization and the board.
- Approve grants.
- Actively advocate for the Arts Council with elected officials.
- Assure sound fiscal management practices.
- Hire and evaluate the Executive Director.
- Assist in community relations functions as appropriate.
- Assist in board recruitment.
- Elect board officers as designated in the bylaws.

4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?

Yes. The Vermont Arts Council serves a vital purpose as the primary funder of arts organizations and arts education in our state.

The organization has served since 1965 as the state’s designated arts agency. We work to build a Vermont where everyone has access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. The Council distributes more than \$800,000 to the field each year through direct grants, programs and services to individual artists, cultural organizations, schools, and communities.

Every state in the nation has an Arts Council or Commission that is funded by both state and federal dollars. The Arts Council is the conduit for the distribution of federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts to communities across Vermont.

5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?

The Council’s contributions to Vermont arts organizations, artists, schools, and communities are well-documented in our annual reports, which may be found here: <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/about-us/annual-reports>

A sample of our impact over the past three years includes:

- Investing a total of \$295,850 in arts-integrated learning for Vermont children through 127 Artists in Schools residencies and 18 Head Start Arts Partnerships. In FY2018, those programs benefited nearly 4,000 students and enabled 305 teachers to collaborate with teaching artists across the state.
- Conceiving and implementing a study to document the economic potential of Vermont's creative enterprises; and developing a strategic action plan for the statewide creative economy.
- Providing vital support for Vermont artists, through professional development, grants, workshops and networking events.
- Supporting 26 community arts organizations with three-year operating funds.
- Sustaining Vermont's cultural facilities through infrastructure grants to 45 town halls, theaters, libraries and other public buildings for improved electrical wiring, HVAC and lighting, and improved accessibility for patrons with disabilities.

Since the COVID19 pandemic hit, the Arts Council has also served as a critical conduit of state, federal, and private funds to artists and cultural organizations.

In collaboration with Vermont Humanities, ACCD and other partners, the Council:

- developed three brand-new grant programs in a matter of weeks;
- distributed emergency relief grants to 425 artists and 181 arts and culture organizations in all 14 Vermont counties;
- launched 5 COVID19 web pages with resources for artists and cultural organizations;
- formed a Creative Sector Response and Recovery Team to assist the administration in mapping a safe re-opening for cultural organizations;
- published a set of Reopening Guidelines for Vermont's creative sector

Additional information about our COVID relief efforts may be found here:

<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/covid-19>

6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?

We believe that the current model of a separate nonprofit that works closely with state government is an effective and efficient way to provide support for cultivating the arts statewide.

7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission's functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?

While we work closely with the Agency of Education on Arts Education programming, with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development on creative economy and creative placemaking initiatives, and with the Agency of Administration on Art in State Buildings and Cultural Facilities programs, there is no other agency in state government whose primary mission is focused on the arts.

8. Does the board or commission's enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?

Yes, the enabling legislation from 1965 remains accurate.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/001/00111>

9. Provide a list of the board and commission's last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

In FY20, our total expenditures were \$2,340,925 (\$835,993 of this was staffing costs). FY20 revenues totaled \$2,290,274 and came from the following sources:

○ State Appropriation	723,589
○ Other Restricted State Revenue	210,436
○ Federal National Endowment for the Arts Grant	1,084,800
○ Other Federal Grants	6,987
○ Private Grants, Contributions, Interest, Misc.	264,462

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?

As a private nonprofit organization, the staff provides regular reports to the Vermont Arts Council board on operations, grants, and other expenditures. The Executive Director presents a budget annually to the Commissioner of Finance and works with a budget analyst appointed by the administration to resolve any budget issues that arise in the course of the year.