

Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA) – Overview

www.mdarts.org (410) 467-6700

Since being created in 1977, MCA has worked closely with Maryland's Governors and General Assembly to increase state funding for the arts, with a focus on the annual appropriation to the Maryland State Arts Council. MCA's goal is to have state funding set at the level needed to provide grants to arts organizations equal to 10% of their budgets. To that end, MCA's work has helped increase the State Arts Council budget by nearly \$5 million since 1999. Support for MCA, a 501(c)(3) organization, comes from its 150 member organizations and 200 corporate, foundation and individual donors.

- Meetings with Elected Officials – MCA trustees and staff meet with key aides to the Governor, members of his Administration, and each member of the Maryland House and Senate subcommittees which oversee the State Arts Council budget. These meetings often include constituents from lawmakers' districts who convey a compelling message of support for the State Arts Council budget.
- Emerging Arts Advocates – MCA is recruiting young professionals from across the state to expand its grassroots network of supporters and build the next generation of arts advocates in Maryland.
- Legislative District Advocacy Teams – MCA has created teams of art supporters in key legislative districts to work with their state legislators and show them the positive impact arts funding has on their constituents and local communities, and to foster ongoing relationships with lawmakers who oversee the arts funding budget.
- Operation Outreach – MCA's staff and trustees make regular visits to the boards and staffs of arts organizations to engage them in its arts advocacy initiatives and build its network of arts advocates.
- Local Funding Issue Support – MCA assists County Arts Councils across Maryland as they take on local funding challenges by enlisting its members and advocates residing in each county to advocate on their behalf.
- Legislative Briefings – MCA hosts several briefings each year that are open to its members and the general public at various locations around the state, to inform participants about the state budget, the upcoming legislative Session, plans for arts advocacy and ways arts supporters can participate in MCA's efforts.
- Bond Bill Training – MCA provides free training sessions to arts organizations on how to navigate the legislative process surrounding capital project bond bill requests from the General Assembly.
- Social Media Grassroots outreach – MCA has a growing presence on the internet through Facebook and Twitter as another means to connect with arts organizations and supporters, and broaden its network of advocates.
- Grassroots Advocacy – MCA initiates and leads advocacy efforts of more than 9,000 e-Advocates who communicate their support of arts funding through e-mails, phone calls and visits to state legislators.
- Budget Testimony – MCA provides and coordinates testimony before the Maryland House and Senate subcommittees in support of the State Arts Council budget each year. Testimony is given by trustees, staff, students and leaders of arts organizations from across the state.
- Maryland Arts Day - Each legislative Session, MCA hosts one full day of advocacy, professional development, educational and networking opportunities in Annapolis. Nearly 500 artists, arts administrators, volunteers and patrons gather to meet and talk with their legislators to advocate for the State Arts Council's funding.