

INFORMATION ABOUT THE NCAG

The National Council on the Arts and Government, established in 1954, is the first national organization in the United States to include representatives of all major art fields and to be concerned primarily with governmental activities and legislation related to the arts. The NCAG is entirely nonpolitical and nonpartisan. Members (limited to 50) are elected for their knowledge of one or more fields of art and may also represent organizations.

The Council's purposes are to consider governmental activities, both legislative and administrative, concerned with the arts on the Federal, State or municipal levels, to assist in strengthening and improving such activities and legislation therefor, and to act to the fullest extent of its limited facilities as a source for information about such matters for organizations and individuals interested in the arts.

REQUEST FOR GRANT FOR PROPOSED NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS AND GOVERNMENT

Applicant.—The National Council on the Arts and Government, 22 West 54th Street, New York 19, N.Y.

Recipient of grant.—Columbia University has generously offered to be host to a National Conference on the Arts and Government, provided it receives the necessary funds in sufficient time for this conference to be properly organized.

Date of conference.—June 1962 after commencement and before summer school begins.

Need for conference.—There is increasing recognition in the United States that Government has a responsibility toward the development and appreciation of the arts. Demonstrations overseas under Federal sponsorship of our artistic achievements, which have enhanced the cultural status of our country abroad, have led to a growing awareness that the arts are a vital factor in the welfare of our own Nation. Assessment of the relationship of Government to the arts in the United States and suggestions leading to sound future policy have become a matter of urgency. The proposed conference and subsequent publication of a comprehensive report would stimulate interest and discussion throughout the country among those with firm opinions—favorable or unfavorable to Government aid for the arts—as well as those who are uncommitted. As workdays shorten and life expectancy lengthens the arts will play an ever more important role in the lives of our citizens. It is not excessive therefore to suggest that this conference could well become a turning point in American cultural life.

Purpose of conference.—The broad purposes of the conference will be—

1. To clarify the issues concerning the arts and Government at the Federal, State, and community levels;
2. To examine various undertakings by Government for the arts both here and abroad, together with their successes, shortcomings, and dangers;
3. To present and discuss proposals for augmented cooperation between Government and private initiative to advance the arts and their appreciation in the United States;
4. To inform and involve professionals in the arts, individuals generally interested in the arts, Government officials in positions of responsibility relative to the arts, and legislators, to the end that intelligent and constructive direction will be taken for the benefit of the artists and the public.

While opposing points of view will be represented and specific legislation discussed or promoted by some individuals, it does not seem appropriate for this conference to reach any collective decisions and certainly not to advance any particular legislative measures. The study sessions should lead to assessment of the situation in various art fields and stimulate proposals leading to improved conditions whether with or without governmental cooperation. The subject is a complex one which needs precisely the kind of public forum which this conference would provide.

Program of conference.—The tentative program for the conference is outlined on attached document A. The speakers at major sessions should be national figures drawn from the fields of the arts, Government, education, and industry. Leaders in the discussions should include outstanding artists, Government administrators, legislators, experts in political science and other disciplines related to art and Government. Effort will be made to secure geographical representation in the selection of participants.