



Utah Art Education Association

## Tips for Speaking With Elected Officials

**Know the facts.** In the pages that follow, you will find everything that ArtServe staff members use when speaking to legislators on pieces of legislation. Take a moment to read over the documents that explain what we are advocating for and how the passage of each bill will benefit Michigan, its people and its communities.

**Be patient and polite.** It is not unusual for a legislator to run late between the day's meetings. Be patient and polite; the legislator's staff will advise you on when he or she will arrive.

**Don't back down.** It is likely that the representative or senator will challenge you as to why such legislation will help the state of Michigan. Don't retreat from the issues stick to the talking points!

More often than not, legislators don't know all the issues and will ask questions. This is your opportunity to inform them of our issues.

**Let them know who you are.** Make sure you let your legislators know that you reside in their district, as they will be more responsive if they know they are speaking to constituents. Be sure to point out that voters in their district support this legislation and so should they.

**Make it personal!** Legislators are more responsive when you attach the human factor to the issue. Tell stories about how arts funding and state grants have benefited the people and communities in the legislator's district. We have included a list of grants that have been awarded in your legislative district, so be sure to point them out.

**Say "Thank you!"** At the end of your meeting, be sure to thank the legislator for his or her time and remember to provide a copy of the group's thank-you letter before you leave.

**Let this be the beginning of a relationship with your legislators.** When you get home, send your legislators a note thanking them for their time. Add them to our mailing lists and invite them to local arts events, openings and other activities that they or their families might enjoy. Be a resource to your legislators. If any of them express interest in obtaining information on a certain arts issue or organization, send it. Let ArtServe know if you need help.