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National Endowment for the Arts Welcomes New Director of Arts Education
Ayanna Hudson joins NEA from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Washington, DC—In 2011, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded more than \$13 million in funding through its arts education program. Beginning on July 2, that significant level of support will be guided by Ayanna Hudson, the agency's new director of arts education. Hudson joins the NEA from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission where she led the commission's lauded Arts for All regional collaborative designed to return arts to the core curriculum. Chairman Landesman made the announcement today at a national forum sponsored by the Arts Education Partnership.

"I am pleased to welcome Ayanna Hudson to the National Endowment for the Arts," said Chairman Rocco Landesman. "Ayanna has built and led an extraordinary program at the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. That pioneering work will be a tremendous asset to the NEA as we seek to strengthen our investment in the creative lives of our nation's young people."

The NEA's arts education program supports projects that provide children and youth with opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in the arts both in and outside the classroom. Funding also supports professional development for teachers, teaching artists, and other education providers. Hudson will be responsible for managing all stages of the grantmaking process including convening the panels that review applications, working with national service organizations on policy initiatives, and serving as the spokesperson for arts education at the federal level.

"I have a profound belief in the mission of the National Endowment for the Arts and I am deeply honored to serve the agency and the residents of the United States in this capacity," said Hudson. "It is with passion and enthusiasm that I join the team at the NEA and I look forward to spearheading strategic efforts to impact the lives of millions of youth through the arts."

Since September 2001, Hudson has been the director of arts education with the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. She developed and led the implementation of Arts for All, ensuring equitable access to arts education for 1.6 million students in the county's 81 school districts, the largest educational system in the country. Arts for All was cited in 2008 by the RAND Corporation as among the top three collaborations nationwide in its study *Revitalizing Arts Education through Community-wide Coordination*. Last year, Arts for All received the 2011 Arts Education Award from the national service organization Americans for the Arts.

During Hudson's tenure, the number of school districts instituting arts education policies and long-range plans increased from 1 to 50, or 62 percent of Los Angeles County school districts. Also, she oversaw training in the California Visual and Performing Arts Standards and best practices in arts education for 400 arts organizations and teaching artists.

Hudson is a sought-after expert in arts education having testified before the U.S. House of Representative's Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee and the Aspen Institute's Blue Ribbon Committee on the impact of No Child Left Behind.

Prior to her work in Los Angeles, Hudson was the program manager for the School Arts Program at the Fulton County Department of Arts and Culture in Atlanta, Georgia. She has a B.A. in psychology from Spelman College and a specialized master's degree in education in risk and prevention from Harvard University.

Ayanna Hudson replaces Sarah Cunningham who left the agency in July 2011 and is now executive director of research at the School of the Arts for Virginia Commonwealth University.