

western arts alliance

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WAA PARTNERS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION TO GENERATE OVERSEAS TOURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. ARTISTS

Portland, OR – September 22, 2022 – Western Arts Alliance (WAA) – the West’s membership association of touring and performing arts professionals – announced a \$300,000 grant award from the International Trade Administration’s (ITA) Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP) today.

The three-year grant will support the expansion of WAA’s Performing Arts Discovery (PAD) program, launched in 2015 by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to promote U.S. performing artists to international programmers, festival directors, and venue managers and reduce barriers for American artists overseas.

The MDCP funding will enable WAA to expand PAD’s reach into new target markets, focusing on Australia, Germany, and Colombia whose performing arts industries align closely with the work of artists in WAA’s PAD and [Advancing Indigenous Performance](#) programs. By partnering with ITA through the MDCP, WAA gains a strong advocate and collaborator with experience in removing barriers to international markets. As an ITA partner, WAA will also receive technical assistance, market research resources, travel support, and access to experts on the ground in international markets. WAA expects the PAD program to generate as much as \$8.7 million in new work for U.S. artists over the next three years.

“The U.S. Department of Commerce is pleased to support the Western Arts Alliance’s Performing Arts Discovery (PAD) program, which creates new opportunities for U.S. performing artists in Australia, Colombia, and Germany. Exporting art and performance brings communities and cultures closer together, and the Commerce Department’s MDCP grant will help reduce barriers and open doors for American artists overseas,” said U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Gina Raimondo.

“Our expansion of the PAD program will open the door to international export opportunities in our targeted markets and beyond,” said WAA’s Executive Director, Joshua Heim. “Artists, who were hit particularly hard by the pandemic, are eager to re-engage with touring. In a time when performing artists need all the help they can get, we are so grateful to the ITA for their support of U.S. artists for the opportunities this grant will create.”

Artists/ensembles accepted into the PAD program receive support from an expert video production team to create professionally produced live performance videos which are promoted and showcased on a virtual platform for international markets. Applications for the 2022 cycle, for which BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ artists are encouraged to apply, will open in November, and application information will be posted on the WAA website. Applications are selected via a panel review process.

In addition to the MDCP grant, PAD is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and managed by WAA on behalf of the [U.S.](#) Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs).

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ABOUT WESTERN ARTS ALLIANCE

WAA is recognized by its peers as a leader in promoting social equity in the arts profession, and commitment to equity is a vital part of its mission and values. WAA's pacesetter leadership fosters professional development, mentoring, networking, and recognition through its comprehensive slate of programs. WAA's signature annual conference provides opportunities to spark industry connections, discover and learn, strengthen ties, and generate business opportunities. For more information, please visit <https://www.westarts.org>.

ABOUT THE PERFORMING ARTS DISCOVERY (PAD) PROGRAM

The PAD program is open to U.S.-based performing artists with a demonstrated ability to tour internationally.

In pre-pandemic years, PAD brought international programmers and festival directors to the Arts Midwest, Performing Arts Exchange, and Western Arts Alliance conferences. In partnership with the NEA, WAA transitioned to the current virtual format for the 2021 cycle – [a cohort of 30 artists](#) – to ensure the program's continuation during COVID-19 and to provide U.S. artists with the resources and relationships to support international touring in preparation for travel being restored. As part of the ITA's Market Development Cooperator Program, PAD will once again seek to strengthen relationships and connections through in-person participation in market events.

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