

## NEFA Identity Statement, Elevator Spoken Guides and Message Platform:

Approved by NEFA board, June 2016

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### A. NEFA Identity Statement

**The New England Foundation for the Arts invests in the arts to enrich communities in New England and beyond.** NEFA accomplishes this by granting funds to artists and cultural organizations; connecting them to each other and their audiences; and analyzing their economic contributions. NEFA serves as a regional partner for the National Endowment for the Arts, New England's state arts agencies, and private foundations. [Learn more at [nefa.org](http://nefa.org)]

### B. NEFA Elevator Conversation Guides

An elevator conversation (as opposed to an elevator pitch) is a spoken explanation of an organization – a verbal, more relaxed version of the identity statement. The guides (below) are intended to help staff and board members help in remain consistent in their live encounters with potential donors and allies. Note that the wording may change based on decisions made about the identity statement, above, so the two are roughly consistent. For example, Conversation 1 below emphasizes the “connector” role that NEFA plays in the cultural community, but if that concept were not featured in the final identity statement, Conversation 1 would have to be changed.

#### *Conversation 1: General*

YOU: After this, I'm prepping for a meeting at the New England Foundation for the Arts. Heard of it?

ACQUAINTANCE: I feel like I should have but I'm not sure. I assume it makes grants for artists.

YOU: Right. That's a big part of the work. But it plays this other role – that of a connector among the artists, organizations, venues and funders. After all, New England has this amazing arts community. We're really lucky. And NEFA plays a pivotal role – helping with funding, linking artists to arts organizations, anything to keep the scene thriving. Do you attend many performances?

ACQUAINTANCE: Every so often. I'm mostly into music.

YOU: NEFA brings a lot of musicians from outside the country to the area. Send me your email and I'll put you on our list if you're interested...

#### *Conversation: 2: For Potential Donor or Leader*

YOU: ...I heard about it through my work with the New England Foundation for the Arts.

ACQUAINTANCE: I think I've heard of it.

YOU: I serve on the board. It's a nonprofit investing in the arts – dance, music, public art. You've heard of the National Endowment for the Arts, right?

ACQUAINTANCE: Sure. In Washington...

YOU: ...well, NEFA is the NEA's partner here in New England. It identifies promising projects qualified for arts support – from both government and private sources.

ACQUAINTANCE: Like foundations?

YOU: Yes, a lot of it. As a board member, I'm helping NEFA sustain the funding sources so support for artists remains steady over the long haul. What kind of shows do you try to catch?

ACQUAINTANCE: We tend to make a few performances at the Huntington. We belong to the MFA.

YOU: Me too. Listen, if you're interested, let me send you some information about NEFA.

### ***Conversation 3: For Policy Makers and Opinion Shapers***

ACQUAINTANCE: I didn't know you were such a fan of the arts.

YOU: Yup. In fact, I'm on the board for the New England Foundation for the Arts. It's kind of a passion of mine these days.

ACQUAINTANCE: Really? What's that about?

YOU: NEFA is about investing in the arts – dance, music, public art, and research into economic impact – but for me it's bigger than that. I see it as a way to really enrich the whole experience of living in New England. Take the economy: Did you know that organizations employ almost as many people in New England as the building construction sector?

ACQUAINTANCE: Wow. I had no idea.

YOU: Yup. And a great arts scene attracts businesses with employees who want to be near that arts scene.

ACQUAINTANCE: That makes sense. And this foundation does what exactly in all this?

YOU: NEFA is a grant maker, so it raises money and gives grants to artists and arts organizations. It's also a convener, so it brings players together to get projects off the ground or get them in front of new audiences. NEFA really is at the center of the creative economy.

ACQUAINTANCE: I get it. Well, I can see why you're so into it.

YOU: I'm pretty busy but it's a lot of fun. You should come with me sometime to one our events...

*Note Source for employment statement is NEFA's 2011 report, "New England's Creative Economy: Nonprofit Sector Impact." Alternative data point: "Did you know more New Englanders are employed in cultural organizations than in, say, machinery manufacturing or trucking?"*

### C. NEFA Message Platform

A message platform is a guide for communicating with your organization’s most important audiences – the people who must act for you to achieve your goals. The words, then, are about spurring action as much as they are about explaining NEFA.

Often, messages for different audiences can be the same or share elements. They also can be starkly different.

Messages can be used in composing remarks, writing marketing copy or composing a social media post. The words can be used verbatim or simply as guides, but the purpose is the same: consistent and audience-centric communications used by everyone in the organization.

Artists & Cultural Organizations (includes grantees)	Donors, Individual	Donors, Institutional	Opinion Shapers	Policy Makers
<p>Individual performers in dance, theater and music, as well as visual artists.</p> <p>Directors of nonprofit arts venues, spaces and galleries.</p> <p>Directors of art support, education or advocacy organizations.</p>	<p>High-net worth individuals with a strong interest in the arts and civic engagement, commitment to the region.</p>	<p>Grant-making foundations giving to the arts and/or to New England.</p> <p>New England companies with charitable arms.</p> <p>Governmental arts agencies, such as NEA.</p>	<p>Art critics, bloggers, editorialists and journalists.</p> <p>Leaders of New England political or commercial institutions involved in the community.</p>	<p>Statehouse and federal legislators representing New England states, especially those serving on appropriations committees.</p>
<p>What action(s) must they take?</p>				
<p>Apply for a NEFA grant/attend NEFA convening/sign up for CreativeGround</p> <p>Encourage others to apply.</p> <p>Speak positively of NEFA and its work.</p>	<p>Give generously to NEFA.</p> <p>Join the Board of Directors or non-governing committee.</p> <p>Speak positively of NEFA and its work.</p>	<p>Award NEFA grants.</p> <p>Recommend NEFA to other grant makers.</p> <p>Speak positively of NEFA and its work.</p>	<p>Speak positively of NEFA and its work.</p>	<p>Vote in favor of arts appropriations.</p>

Artists & Cultural Organizations (includes grantees)	Donors, Individual	Donors, Institutional	Opinion Shapers	Policy Makers
What do they desire?				
<p>Ability to continue making arts.</p> <p>Larger audiences.</p> <p>Recognition from peers, art enthusiasts, critics.</p> <p>Contribute to a positive environment for art and artists.</p>	<p>See measurable impacts.</p> <p>Recognition for their role.</p> <p>Being a part of something innovative and exciting.</p> <p>Attract artists and live in vibrant community.</p>	<p>Advance their strategic goals.</p> <p>See measurable impacts.</p> <p>Replicate successes elsewhere.</p> <p>Please institutional leadership and peers.</p> <p>Being a part of something innovative and exciting.</p>	<p>For writers: Attract readers and viewers.</p> <p>For others: Contribute to a positive environment for art and artists.</p> <p>Enhance their own standing among peers.</p>	<p>Reelection.</p> <p>Support (donations, volunteer time, endorsements) from constituents.</p> <p>Advance their policy goals.</p> <p><i>Opportunity to align with a popular activity, program or service.</i></p>

What do we say to them?				
<p>New England, with smart audiences and a deep cultural history, can be a wonderful place to create and perform art. At the same time, finding the resources and the supportive community to consistently make and share your art is an ongoing challenge.</p> <p>NEFA exists to help you meet that challenge – by investing in artists and arts organizations enriching the lives of New Englanders through their work.</p>	<p>New England is home to an impressive array of talented artists and arts organizations.</p> <p>But this impressive community of creativity requires care and cultivation to thrive.</p> <p>That’s where NEFA comes in. Operating as a private, nonprofit charity, NEFA sends dancers, actors and musicians on tour, funds public art, and studies the economic impact of New England’s creative sector.</p> <p>For 40 years, NEFA has operated as a hub –</p>	<p>New England is home to an impressive array of talented artists and arts organizations.</p> <p>But this impressive community of creativity requires care and cultivation to thrive.</p> <p>That’s where NEFA comes in. Operating as a private, nonprofit charity, NEFA sends dancers, actors and musicians on tour, funds public art, and studies the economic impact of New England’s creative sector.</p> <p>For 40 years, NEFA has operated as a hub –</p>	<p>New England’s economy benefits from a vibrant, sustainable arts scene.</p> <p>Arts and cultural organizations are a major employer, employing more New Englanders than the machinery manufacturing or trucking sectors.</p> <p>Moreover, companies recruiting high-skill employees in technology and other growing fields know employees value cities with vibrant arts scenes.</p> <p>Public funding for the arts, then, is a smart investment in New England’s economy.</p> <p><i>or</i></p>	<p>New England’s economy benefits from a vibrant, sustainable arts scene.</p> <p>Arts and cultural organizations are a major employer, employing more New Englanders than the machinery manufacturing or trucking sectors.</p> <p>Moreover, companies recruiting high-skill employees in technology and other growing fields know employees value cities with vibrant arts scenes.</p>

<p>NEFA raises money through private and government sources, and then uses it to cultivate and promote the arts. It also convene artists and arts leaders to share best practices and launch new projects.</p> <p>To succeed, NEFA seeks qualified artists and arts organizations to join us in keeping New England a wonderful place for creators.</p> <p><i>Action: Apply for NEFA grant support. Attend a NEFA-sponsored networking event. Sign up for Creative Ground.</i></p>	<p>connecting artist to organizations and investing in them to create synergies that didn't exist before. In this central role, NEFA learns what works and what's worth sharing across New England – and beyond.</p> <p><i>Action: Support NEFA through your generous gifts. Consider joining NEFA in a leadership capacity.</i></p>	<p>connecting artist to organizations and investing in them to create synergies that didn't exist before. In this central role, NEFA learns what works and what's worth sharing across New England – and beyond.</p> <p><i>Action: Support NEFA through grant awards. Endorse and participate in NEFA's networking activities.</i></p>	<p>New England is home to an impressive array of talented artists and arts organizations. But this impressive community of creativity requires care and cultivating to thrive.</p> <p>That's where NEFA comes in. Operating as a private, nonprofit charity, NEFA sends dancers, actors and musicians on tour, funds public art, and studies the economic impact of New England's creative sector.</p> <p>For 40 years, NEFA has operated as a hub – connecting artist to organizations and investing in them to create synergies that didn't exist before. In this central role, NEFA learns what works and what's worth sharing across New England – and beyond.</p> <p><i>Action: Endorse NEFA's mission and activities with colleagues, audiences and personal networks.</i></p>	<p>Public funding for the arts, then, is a smart investment in New England's economy.</p> <p><i>Action: Support robust public funding for the arts. Leverage NEFA's analysis of the economic impact of the arts and cultural sector.</i></p>
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