



## State advocates gear up for Wisconsin Arts Day

The most important day of the year is coming up for many Wisconsin artists and arts groups. The 18th annual Arts Day will be held in Madison on March 11, a day for arts advocates to unite and educate lawmakers on the importance of the arts in their home districts.

The event annually draws around 250 arts supporters from across the state, including business leaders and public officials, to share ideas, network and speak to state lawmakers about various arts issues, including the potential financial impact of the arts.

“There is one day out of 365 that creative workers and arts administrators gather to make our voices heard about the importance of public policy and financial investment to support the work we do,” says Karin Wolf, program administrator at the city of Madison Arts Commission.

“We help create jobs, develop a skilled workforce, revitalize neighborhoods, attract tourists, draw businesses and talent to our state,” she says. “It is critical to make sure our legislators hear this message.”

Arts Day is organized by Arts Wisconsin, a state cultural advocacy organization. “The state budget is in play and a new economy is developing locally and globally,” says executive director Anne Katz. “It’s certainly an ‘interesting’ time.”

Gov. Scott Walker’s proposed 2015–17 budget is a special concern of the Madison-based nonprofit. Walker’s suggested cutting funds for the University of Wisconsin System by 13 percent and cutting all state support for Wisconsin Public Television and Wisconsin Public Radio. Among other issues, Arts Wisconsin will ask legislators to review the governor’s priorities.

Arts Day activities will be split between the Capitol, the Madison Central Library and the Overture Center for the Arts. Workshops, live performances and panel discussions will be featured.

The keynote speaker will be Randy Cohen, vice president for research and policy at Americans for the Arts. The organization, based in Washington, D.C., is Arts Wisconsin’s national counterpart. He’ll speak on “the power, benefit and impact of the

arts locally and globally.” Wisconsin poet laureate Kimberly Blaeser also will address the gathering.

“It’s more important than ever that people who care about Wisconsin’s future speak up in support of the arts, our creative economy, and the quality of life we cherish in Wisconsin,” says Katz. “There is strength in numbers. That’s what Arts Day is all about.”

Participants may register online or in person starting at 8 a.m. on March 11. Activities last through mid-afternoon. A pre-Arts Day mini-conference will be held 1-5 p.m. on March 10 at the Risser Justice Center, 120 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Its focus will be the arts and creativity in education, and will include opportunities for networking and idea-sharing.

For more details, visit [artswisconsin.org](http://artswisconsin.org), or contact Anne Katz at 608-255-8316 or [akatz@artswisconsin.org](mailto:akatz@artswisconsin.org).