

NEW REPORT RELEASED ON SUSTAINABILITY OF DOCUMENTARY FILM FIELD

**National Endowment for the Arts & International Documentary Association
Partner to Assist the Field**

Washington, DC (August 2, 2017) – according to a new report about documentary film, [*State of the Field: A Report from the Documentary Sustainability Summit*](#). While more documentaries are created and viewed than ever before, the field is being buffeted by ever-shifting cultural and business environments that threaten its viability. This report issued by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in partnership with the [International Documentary Association \(IDA\)](#), seeks to chart a course towards a sustainable future by calling out key challenges, illuminating those challenges through case studies, and offering actions that can strengthen the field and support filmmakers.

“I look forward to seeing this report serve as a roadmap towards strengthening the field for documentary professionals,” said NEA Director of Media Arts Jax Deluca. “By sharing these findings with a national audience, we want to encourage new cross-sector partnerships and improve the policies and systems that impact the livelihoods of professionals at all levels of the documentary film ecosystem.”

“There are no easy answers to the challenges faced by many in the documentary field,” said Simon Kilmurry, executive director of the IDA. “But we hope that these open and solution-oriented conversations build a stronger documentary field that not only survives but thrives.”

State of the Field: A Report from the Documentary Sustainability Summit emerged from a February 10, 2017 convening of the documentary community, as well as leaders from government and the arts. Among the 80 summit participants were leading documentary filmmakers, producers, distributors, film festival representatives, and funders.

The February summit and report are part of an NEA effort to fortify the documentary ecosystem that also includes a series of free webinars featuring conversations with guest presenters who will expand on issues identified in the report.

THE REPORT

State of the Field: A Report from the Documentary Sustainability Summit is a rallying call to those involved in the multi-faceted documentary sector. The report urges

- More cross-sector collaborations, especially with technology companies, to access resources, expand peer networks, and amplify field resiliency
- New or adaptable business models that offer better compensation to filmmakers
- Greater understanding and deeper engagement with public officials
- Recognition of the primacy of research in persuasive communication

Four case studies provide real world examples of successfully managing some of the cited challenges. A collection of other resources completes the report, all serving to shape “a forward-thinking future that re-envision current systems.”

WEBINARS

The NEA will offer [four free webinars](#) that provide opportunities for the public to engage with experts in the field such as Cynthia Lopez, former NYC film commissioner; Sarah Wolozin, director of MIT Open Doc Lab; and Sue Shardt, CEO of the Association for Independents in Radio. Webinar topics are:

- Report Overview: State of the Documentary Field on Thursday, August 10
- Building Resiliency: Emerging Forms & Collaborative Networks on Tuesday, September 5
- Supporting Independent Productions: Film Rebate & Tax Incentive Programs on Thursday, September 21
- Strengthening Communities: Regional Programs & Public Broadcast Initiatives on Thursday, October 12

All webinars take place from 3:00 to 4:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time. All guest presenters, session descriptions, and [registration details are here](#).

FUNDING

The NEA supports the creation, distribution and presentation of documentary and other media forms primarily through the Media Arts office. Supported projects range from national broadcasts of programs on public television seen by millions of people across the country to the creation of films about people and cultures, to film festivals and educational activities held in communities small and large.

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About the National Endowment for the Arts: Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate

in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. More is at arts.gov.

About The International Documentary Association: Documentary storytelling expands our understanding of shared human experience, fostering an informed, compassionate, and connected world. The International Documentary Association (IDA) is dedicated to building and serving the needs of a thriving documentary culture. Through its programs, the IDA provides resources, creates community, and defends rights and freedoms for documentary artists, activists, and journalists.

www.documentary.org

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