

Dance/USA

# Dance Advocacy Toolkit: A Guide to Creating Change in Dance

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# Welcome!

Welcome to your Dance Advocacy Toolkit!

Whether you're a professional dancer facing workplace challenges, a teacher advocating for better conditions for your students, or an artistic director seeking to influence policy at the local and national levels, this workbook provides practical tools you need to create meaningful change.

Remember: Advocacy is not just about speaking up—it's about strategic action that creates lasting change.

Let's get started.

Bertrand Evans-Taylor,  
Director of Government Affairs, Dance/USA

# In Remembrance of Toni Pierce-Sands

In March 2025, Toni Pierce-Sands, Founder & Artistic Director of TU Dance, and her colleague Laurel Lawson, Artistic Associate, invited me into a conversation about what dancers need from a field that too often asks for their labor without offering clarity, protection, or power. That conversation led directly to creating a workshop for TU Dance, *Advocacy in Action: Navigating Power & Change in Dance*, and ultimately to the development of this toolkit.

From the beginning, Toni was clear about the care required to do this work well. Our conversations named hierarchy, power, and gatekeeping in the dance field, and acknowledged how intimidating advocacy can feel for dancers navigating professional systems shaped by precarity, reputation, and unspoken rules. That attention to care directly shaped the workshop design, which prioritized immediacy and agency over abstract theory, focusing on how dancers can identify what they are able to do, where they already hold power, and how advocacy can take many forms. Through icebreakers, roleplay, and power-mapping exercises, dancers explored both “big A” and “little a” advocacy, reinforcing that there is a place and a path for everyone, at every level of comfort, to participate in shaping the field.

Underlying the entire process was a shared understanding that dance itself is a form of resistance. Because dance moves spirit and mind through the body, it can unlock truths that are difficult to articulate in words alone. This understanding shaped how we approached advocacy—not as something separate from artistry, but as something already embedded in how dancers move, create, and relate to one another.

Looking back, it is a profound honor to have collaborated with Toni in the final year of her life. At the time, I understood the work as timely and important; only in reflection do I fully grasp its weight. This toolkit represents more than a professional milestone for me—it is a continuation of a conversation Toni was deeply invested in: how dancers understand power, how they care for themselves and one another, and how they navigate institutions with both discernment and courage.

May this resource serve not only as a practical guide, but as a living continuation of that inquiry. One that honors Toni Pierce-Sands by equipping dancers to move through the field with clarity, integrity, and agency.

Bertrand Evans-Taylor,  
Director of Government Affairs, Dance/USA



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# Advocacy and Dance Workforce Resources

*Find arts advocacy groups to follow and get involved with*  
Dance/Performing Arts Organizations

## **Dance/USA**

- Website: [danceusa.org](http://danceusa.org)
- Focus: Professional dance ecosystem advocacy and support
- How to engage: Membership, webinars, advocacy alerts
- Social: [@danceusaorg](https://twitter.com/danceusaorg)
- Contact: [advocacy@danceusa.org](mailto:advocacy@danceusa.org)

## **Dance/NYC**

- Website: [dance.nyc](http://dance.nyc)
- Focus: Promoting a just and equitable dance community in NYC
- How to engage: Field-Wide Calls, events, advocacy resources
- Social: [@dance.nyc](https://twitter.com/dance.nyc)

## **International Association of Blacks in Dance**

- Website: [iabdassociation.org](http://iabdassociation.org)
- Focus: Equity and inclusion in dance
- How to engage: Membership, conferences, local chapters
- Social: [@iabdinc](https://twitter.com/iabdinc)

## **Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP)**

- Website: [apap365.org](http://apap365.org)
- Focus: Professional development and advocacy for performing arts professionals
- How to engage: Membership, annual conference, year-round programs
- Social: [@apap365](https://twitter.com/apap365)

# Advocacy and Dance Workforce Resources

*Find arts advocacy groups to follow and get involved with*

## **Theatre Communications Group (TCG)**

- Website: [tcg.org](http://tcg.org)
- Focus: National service and support organization for theatre
- How to engage: Membership, community forums, participate in Theatre Advocacy Week
- Social: [@tcg\\_gram](https://www.instagram.com/tcg_gram)

## Multidisciplinary & Music Organizations

### **National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC)**

- Website: [nalac.org](http://nalac.org)
- Focus: Stabilizes and revitalizes the US Latino arts and cultural sector
- How to engage: Membership, convenings, field notes
- Social: [@nalac\\_arts](https://www.instagram.com/nalac_arts)

### **National Performance Network (NPN)**

- Website: [nfnweb.org](http://nfnweb.org)
- Focus: Collaborative network that advances racial and cultural justice through the arts
- How to engage: Conferences and events, peer-to-peer development
- Social: [@nfnarts](https://www.instagram.com/nfnarts)

### **Chorus America**

- Website: [chorusamerica.org](http://chorusamerica.org)
- Focus: Advocacy and leadership development for the choral field
- How to engage: Membership, online community, conferences, and year-round programs
- Social: [Chorus America](https://www.facebook.com/ChorusAmerica) (FB)

# Advocacy and Dance Workforce Resources

*Find arts advocacy groups to follow and get involved with*

## **League of American Orchestras**

- Website: [americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org)
- Focus: Advocacy and research organization for orchestras
- How to engage: Membership, constituency/affinity groups, leadership programs
- Social: [League of American Orchestras](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofAmericanOrchestras) (FB)

## **New Music USA**

- Website: [newmusicusa.org](http://newmusicusa.org)
- Focus: Supporting music makers and the music ecosystem
- How to engage: Community events, online articles and interviews
- Social: [@newmusicusa](https://www.instagram.com/newmusicusa)

## **Opera America**

- Website: [operaamerica.org](http://operaamerica.org)
- Focus: Leadership and service organization for opera community
- How to engage: Membership, affinity groups, advocacy resources
- Social: [@operaamerica](https://www.instagram.com/operaamerica)

## **Additional Allies in Cultural Advocacy Groups (not in Performing Arts Alliance)**

### **Americans for the Arts**

- Website: [americansforthearts.org](http://americansforthearts.org)
- Focus: Federal arts funding, policy advocacy, research
- How to engage: Join their Action Network for alerts, attend Arts Advocacy Day
- Social: [@Americans4Arts](https://www.instagram.com/Americans4Arts)

# Advocacy and Dance Workforce Resources

*Find arts advocacy groups to follow and get involved with*

## **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)**

- Website: [nasaa-arts.org](http://nasaa-arts.org)
- Focus: Strengthening the nation's state arts agencies
- How to engage: Membership, sign up for legislative updates
- Social: [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies: NASAA](#) (FB)

## **American Alliance of Museums (AAM)**

- Website: [aam-us.org](http://aam-us.org)
- Focus: Promoting equitable and impactful museums
- How to engage: Annual meeting, Museums Advocacy Day, online resources/toolkits/guides
- Social: [@aamersofficial](#)

## **American Library Association (ALA)**

- Website: [ala.org](http://ala.org)
- Focus: Ensuring equitable access to information through libraries
- How to engage: Membership, advocacy updates, conferences
- Social: [@americanlibraryassociation](#)

## **Association of Children's Museums (ACM)**

- Website: [childrensmuseums.org](http://childrensmuseums.org)
- Focus: Championing children's museums
- How to engage: Membership, Worldwide Day of Play, advocacy resources
- Social: [Association of Children's Museums](#) (FB)

# Advocacy and Dance Workforce Resources

*Find arts advocacy groups to follow and get involved with*

## Regional Arts Service Organizations

### **Arts Midwest (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, ND, OH, SD, WI)**

- Website: [artsmidwest.org](http://artsmidwest.org)
- Social: [@arts\\_midwest](https://www.facebook.com/arts_midwest)

### **Mid Atlantic Arts (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA, WV, VI)**

- Website: [midatlanticarts.org](http://midatlanticarts.org)
- Social: [Mid Atlantic Arts](https://www.facebook.com/MidAtlanticArts) (FB)

### **New England Foundation for the Arts (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)**

- Website: [nefa.org](http://nefa.org)
- Social: [NEFA](https://www.facebook.com/NEFA) (FB)

### **South Arts (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VI)**

- Website: [southarts.org](http://southarts.org)
- Social: [@southartsorg](https://www.facebook.com/southartsorg)

### **Western States Arts Federation (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY)**

- Website: [westaf.org](http://westaf.org)
- Social: [Creative West](https://www.facebook.com/CreativeWest) (FB)

# Advocacy and Dance Workforce Resources

*Find arts advocacy groups to follow and get involved with*

## State Arts Advocacy Organizations

### **How to Find Your State Organization:**

- Search [Your State] arts council or [Your State] arts advocacy
- Search your state government website for Arts & Culture

**Examples:** *California Arts Advocates, MASSCreative, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, South Carolina Arts Alliance, Texas Arts & Culture Coalition*

### **What to Look For:**

- Legislative tracking and alerts
- Arts Advocacy Day events
- Coalition opportunities
- Local networking events

## Local Arts Advocacy Organizations

### **How to Find Your Local Organizations:**

- Search [Your City] + arts council
- Check your city government website under "Arts & Culture"
- Contact your state arts agency for local contacts

### **What They Offer:**

- Funding opportunities
- Local advocacy campaigns
- Direct access to city council and mayor
- Community organizing opportunities

# Coalition Building Worksheet

Keep track of your progress as you begin to engage with advocacy organizations of your choosing. Remember, there are regulations and laws to consider for nonprofit organizations; these are suggested actions for individuals.

## Start Small

- Follow 3-5 organizations on social media
- Sign up for one newsletter
- Attend one virtual event or webinar

## Build Connections

- Intro yourself to local, state or federal officials via email
- Volunteer for meaningful events
- Share their content with your network

## Take Action

- Respond to action alerts
- Attend advocacy days or events
- Write letters when organizations request them
- Donate

## Organizations I want to connect with:

## Events I plan to attend:

*Duplicate this page and add new pages as needed!*

# Government Contact Templates

*Letter/email formats and phone call scripts for maximum impact*

## Research Checklist

*While not always necessary, it might feel helpful to prepare the following before you contact your representatives. Here are some things you can research and jot some notes down on before you write or call:*

### **Know Your Representatives**

Name and correct title: \_\_\_\_\_

Party affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee memberships (especially relevant: Education, Arts, Labor):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recent votes or statements on arts issues:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Local office address and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Know Your Issue:**

Specific bill number or policy name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your clear position (support/oppose): \_\_\_\_\_

How it affects your district/state: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How it affects you personally: \_\_\_\_\_

## Best Practices

Call vs. email when issue is more time-sensitive/urgent

### **Contact Tips:**

- Include your full contact information
- Always include your location (shows you're a constituent)
- Be specific about the issue
- Keep it brief (short paragraphs/statements)
- Prep and proofread to feel confident in your outreach

# Government Contact Templates

*Letter/email formats and phone call scripts for maximum impact*

## Template 1: Supporting Arts Funding

**Subject Line:** Support Arts Funding - [Your Name], [Your City] Constituent

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

My name is [Name] and I am your constituent in [City, State]. As a [your role: dancer, teacher, choreographer, etc.] in our community, I am writing to urge your support for [specific program/bill].

*[2-3 sentences about your work in their district. For example: "I teach dance to 150 students annually at ABC Studio, including 40 children who receive scholarships funded by your program. These programs have transformed our community by..."]*

I urge you to [specific action: vote yes on, cosponsor, support funding for] [specific bill/program] because:

1. **Economic Impact:** [Include local statistics if available]
2. **Community Benefit:** [Specific examples from your area]

Without your support, our community will lose [specific consequences].

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you or your staff. Thank you for your consideration and your service to our district.

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]  
[Your Address]  
[Your Phone Number]  
[Your Email]

# Government Contact Templates

*Letter/email formats and phone call scripts for maximum impact*

## Template 2: Opposing Harmful Legislation

**Subject Line:** Oppose [Bill Number] - Concerns from [Your City] Arts Professional

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

I am writing as your constituent in [City, State] to express my strong opposition to [Bill Number/Policy Name] and urge you to vote against it.

As a [your role] with [number] years of experience in our local arts community, I have seen firsthand how [relevant experience that gives you expertise].

[Bill/Policy] would [specific negative impacts]. This will directly harm [specific affected groups] in our district by [specific consequences].

In my work [specific example of how this would affect you, your students, your organization, etc.]. This is not just about me—it affects [people/organizations] in [your area].

I urge you to vote NO on [Bill Number] and instead support [alternative solution if applicable].

I am available to discuss this issue further and would appreciate knowing your position on this important matter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]  
[Your Address]  
[Your Phone Number]  
[Your Email]

# Government Contact Templates

*Letter/email formats and phone call scripts for maximum impact*

## Template 3: General Relationship Building

**Subject Line:** Introduction from [Your City] Dance Professional

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a dance professional living in [specific area of district/state]. I am writing to introduce myself as a resource on arts and cultural issues affecting our community.

*[2-3 sentences about your work, credentials, and connection to the community]*

As someone who works daily with [students, professional dancers, arts organizations, etc.], I see firsthand how policy decisions affect real people in your district. I would welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource when arts-related issues come before [Congress/the Legislature].

Some current examples of arts impact in our area include:

- [Specific local program or impact]
- [Economic or community benefit]
- [Challenge or opportunity]

I am not asking for anything specific today—just offering my expertise and hoping to build a relationship with your office. I would be happy to arrange a brief meeting to discuss the role of dance and arts in our community's economic and cultural life.

Thank you for your service to our district.

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]  
[Your Address]  
[Your Phone Number]  
[Your Email]

# Government Contact Templates

*Letter/email formats and phone call scripts for maximum impact*

## Phone Call Script 1 - Quick Action Alert Call

**When you call:** "Hi, I'm calling to speak with someone about [Representative's] position on [specific issue]."

**Your message:** "My name is [Your Name] and I'm a constituent in [location]. I'm calling to urge [Representative/Senator] [Last Name] to [support/oppose] [specific bill/issue]."

As a [your role] in the district, this issue directly affects [brief personal impact]. I hope [Representative/Senator] [Last Name] will [specific action you want] because [one key reason].

Can you tell me [Representative's/Senator's] position on this issue? And will you please pass along my message?

Thank you."

### **Information to collect:**

- Staff member's name
- Representative's current position (if they'll share)
- Timeline for decision
- Best way to follow up

# Government Contact Templates

*Letter/email formats and phone call scripts for maximum impact*

## Phone Call Script 2 - Meeting Request Call

"Hi, I'm calling to request a meeting with [Representative/Senator] [Last Name] or a member of their staff.

My name is [Your Name], and I'm a [your role] and constituent in [location]. I would like to discuss [specific issue] and how it affects our local dance/arts community.

I represent [number of people/organization if applicable] and have [relevant expertise/experience]. I'm flexible on timing and would be happy to meet at the [local office location].

What would be the best way to schedule this? Should I send a follow-up email?

Thank you for your time."

Don't forget to also post and tag your representatives on social media!

**For Support:** Thank you @[RepHandle] for supporting [issue/bill]. As a dance professional in [location], I see how this benefits our community every day.  
#ArtsAdvocacy #DanceAdvocacy

**For Requests:** @[RepHandle] As your constituent and a dance professional in [location], I urge you to support [specific ask]. Our community needs this.  
#ArtsAdvocacy #DanceAdvocacy

**For Information Sharing:** Did you know [interesting fact about arts in your district]? Thanks to representatives like @[RepHandle] who support [relevant policy]. #ArtsImpact #DanceAdvocacy

# Power Mapping Exercise

*Simple steps to understand who has power in any dance organization*

## What is Power Mapping?

Power mapping helps you figure out who can actually make the change you want to happen. Through this process, you can identify the real decision-makers and plan how to approach them.

### Step 1: Define Your Issue

What change do you want?



Who can make that change happen?



### Step 2: List the Key Players

Write down 5-8 people who have influence over your issue:



# Power Mapping Exercise

## Step 3: Simple Power Map

### HIGH POWER + SUPPORTS YOU

These are your champions;  
ask them to help




### HIGH POWER + OPPOSES/UNKNOWN

These are your targets;  
focus your efforts here



### LOW POWER + SUPPORTS YOU

These are your allies; mobilize them



### LOW POWER + OPPOSES YOU

Stay aware, but don't spend much  
time here



# Power Mapping Exercise

## Step 4: Make Your Plan

**Your Champions:** What will you ask them to do?

**Your Main Targets:** How will you approach them?

**Your Allies:** How will you mobilize them?

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

*Know your protections as a dance professional*

## Disclaimer

*This guide provides general information about legal protections for dance professionals. Laws vary by state and locality, and this information should not be considered legal advice. For specific legal questions or if you believe your rights have been violated, consult with an employment attorney or contact your local legal aid organization.*

## Federal Employment Laws That Protect Dance Professionals

### ***Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964***

**What it covers:** Discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin

**Applies to:** Employers with 15 or more employees

#### **In dance contexts:**

- Casting decisions cannot be based on protected characteristics unless it's a "bona fide occupational qualification" (very narrow exception)
- Pay disparities based on gender, race, or other protected characteristics
- Hostile work environment based on protected characteristics
- Discriminatory hiring, firing, or promotion decisions

#### **Examples of violations:**

- Paying male dancers more than female dancers for the same work
- Refusing to hire dancers of certain racial backgrounds for non-artistic reasons
- Creating a hostile environment through sexual or racial harassment

**What to do:** File complaint with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180-300 days (varies by state)

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)***

**What it covers:** Discrimination based on disability; requires reasonable accommodations

**Applies to:** Employers with 15 or more employees

### **In dance contexts:**

- Reasonable accommodations for dancers with disabilities
- Access to facilities and programs
- Medical information privacy
- Retaliation protection for requesting accommodations

### **Examples of violations:**

- Refusing to provide reasonable schedule accommodations for medical treatments
- Firing a dancer solely because of a disclosed disability
- Failing to make performance venues accessible

### **Reasonable accommodations might include:**

- Modified work schedules
- Accessible facilities
- Modified job duties (if it doesn't fundamentally alter the job)

## ***Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)***

**What it covers:** Minimum wage, overtime pay, record-keeping

**Applies to:** Most employers (with some exceptions for small businesses)

### **In dance contexts:**

- Minimum wage requirements for all work hours
- Overtime pay (time and a half) for hours over 40 per week
- Proper classification of employees vs. independent contractors
- Payment for rehearsal time, classes, and all work activities

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## **Common violations in dance:**

- Classifying dancers as independent contractors when they should be employees
- Not paying for mandatory company class or rehearsals
- Requiring dancers to work for free or below minimum wage
- Not tracking or paying overtime

## **Employee vs. Independent Contractor:**

You're likely an employee if:

- The organization controls when, where, and how you work
- You're provided with equipment or costumes
- You work exclusively or primarily for one organization
- You receive regular wages rather than project-based payment

## ***Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)***

**What it covers:** Unpaid leave for family and medical reasons

**Applies to:** Employers with 50+ employees; employees who've worked 1,250 hours in the past year

### **Covers:**

- Serious health conditions
- Birth or adoption of a child
- Care for family member with serious health condition

### **In dance contexts:**

- Injury recovery time
- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Caring for injured family members

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## Independent Contractor vs. Employee Rights

Many dance professionals work as independent contractors, which provides fewer protections.

### ***As an Independent Contractor:***

#### **You have rights to:**

- Payment according to your contract terms
- A safe working environment
- Protection from discrimination in some contexts
- Workers' compensation (varies by state)

#### **You generally don't have rights to:**

- Minimum wage or overtime protections
- Employment benefits
- Unemployment insurance
- FMLA leave

### ***Misclassification Issues:***

If you're classified as an independent contractor but should be an employee, you may be able to:

- File for back wages and overtime
- Claim unemployment benefits
- Receive workers' compensation
- Get employment law protections

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## State and Local Laws

Many states and cities have stronger protections than federal law. Common additional protections include:

### ***Expanded Anti-Discrimination Laws***

- Sexual orientation and gender identity protection
- Marital status protection
- Pregnancy accommodation requirements
- Lower employee thresholds (protecting workers at smaller organizations)

### ***Wage and Hour Protections***

- Higher minimum wages
- Paid sick leave requirements
- Predictive scheduling laws
- Ban on salary history questions

### ***Safety and Health***

- Right to refuse unsafe work
- Whistleblower protections
- Workplace safety standards

### **Research your state and local laws at:**

- Your state's Department of Labor website
- Your city's human rights commission
- Legal aid organizations in your area

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## Union Rights and Protections

If you work in a unionized workplace, you have additional protections under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

### ***Relevant Unions for Dance Professionals:***

- **American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA):** Opera, dance, and concert artists
- **Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC):** Directors and choreographers
- **Actors' Equity Association:** Some dance-theater work
- **Local unions:** Some dance workers organize with broader entertainment or service worker unions

### ***Rights Under Union Contracts:***

- Specific wage scales and working conditions
- Grievance procedures for disputes
- Health and pension benefits
- Protection against arbitrary firing
- Safety standards

### ***Right to Organize:***

Even in non-union workplaces, you have the right to:

- Discuss wages and working conditions with coworkers
- Form or join a union
- Engage in “concerted activity” for mutual benefit
- Not be retaliated against for union activity

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## Workplace Safety Rights

### ***Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)***

#### **Your rights:**

- Safe and healthful workplace
- Information about hazards and safety measures
- File complaints about safety hazards
- Protection from retaliation for reporting safety issues

#### ***Common Safety Issues in Dance:***

- Working in unsafe environments
- Inadequate ventilation
- Overcrowded rehearsal spaces
- Lack of proper medical support
- Exposure to hazardous materials
- Violence or threats in the workplace

#### ***What to do about safety issues:***

1. Report to supervisor or safety officer
2. Document the hazard and your report
3. If not addressed, contact OSHA
4. Contact your union (if applicable)
5. Consult with an attorney if retaliation occurs

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## Sexual Harrassment and Assault

### ***Legal Protections:***

- Title VII protects against sexual harassment in workplaces with 15+ employees
- Many state laws extend to smaller workplaces
- Criminal laws protect against assault
- Some states have specific arts industry protections

### ***Types of Sexual Harassment:***

1. **Quid Pro Quo:** "You must do X to get/keep your job"
2. **Hostile Environment:** Pervasive unwelcome sexual conduct that affects work conditions

### ***Unique Issues in Dance:***

- Physical contact inherent in partnering
- Costume changes and dressing rooms
- Power dynamics between teachers/directors and students/dancers
- Touring situations with shared accommodations

### ***What constitutes harassment:***

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favors
- Physical touching without consent (beyond necessary artistic contact)
- Sexual comments about body or appearance
- Displaying sexual materials
- Sexual jokes or innuendo that creates hostile environment

### ***What to do:***

1. **Document everything:** Dates, witnesses, what was said/done
2. **Report according to organization policy** (if they have one)
3. **File with EEOC or state agency** (within time limits)
4. **Contact police** if criminal conduct occurred
5. **Consult with an attorney**
6. **Contact crisis support services** for emotional support

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## Contract and Pay

### ***Common Contract Problems:***

- **Not having a contract at all!**
- **Late payments:** Violates contract terms and may violate wage laws
- **Unclear terms:** Vague language about responsibilities, pay, or working conditions
- **Unfair terms:** One-sided contracts that heavily favor the employer
- **Verbal agreements:** Difficult to enforce when disputes arise
- **Scope creep:** Being asked to do work beyond what was contracted

### ***Pay-Related Rights:***

- **Prompt payment:** Most states require payment within specific timeframes
- **Written contracts:** Some states require written agreements for certain work
- **Payment for all work:** Including rehearsals, classes, meetings, travel time (depending on employment status)
- **Expense reimbursement:** For work-related costs (varies by agreement)

### ***What to do about pay problems:***

1. Review your contract carefully
2. Document all work performed
3. Send written payment requests with deadlines
4. File wage claims with state labor departments
5. Consider small claims court for contract disputes
6. Consult with an employment attorney

# Legal Rights Reference Guide

## Intellectual Property and Creative Rights

### *Choreographic Works:*

- **Copyright protection:** Original choreography can be copyrighted
- **Work for hire:** If created as employee, employer may own the copyright
- **Independent contractor:** You may retain rights unless specifically assigned
- **Video/photo rights:** Separate from choreographic copyright

### *Performer Rights:*

- **Right of publicity:** Control over use of your name, likeness, voice
- **Video/photo consent:** Right to control how images are used
- **Social media:** Be aware of what you're agreeing to in contracts

### *What to negotiate:*

- **Credit requirements:** How your work will be attributed
- **Usage rights:** Where and how your work can be used
- **Revenue sharing:** If your work generates income
- **Moral rights:** Protection against distortion of your work

# Advocacy Action Planner

*Simple monthly planning for sustained advocacy*

## Why Plan Your Advocacy?

Consistent, small actions create more change than sporadic big efforts. This simple planning system helps you stay focused and build momentum over time.



## Quick Advocacy Action Ideas

### **When you have 15 minutes:**

- Email your representative about current arts issue
- Share advocacy organization's post on social media
- Sign up for advocacy alerts
- Read about one policy issue affecting dance

### **When you have 1 hour:**

- Attend a virtual city council meeting
- Research your representatives' voting records
- Call your representative's office
- Meet with a potential ally

### **When you have 3+ hours:**

- Attend an in-person meeting or event
- Organize a group of colleagues around an issue
- Prepare testimony for a public hearing
- Plan a coalition meeting

# Monthly Planner

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

## This Month's Goal:

*What's the ONE thing you want to accomplish this month?*

## 3 Actions To Take:

*Pro tip: include deadlines!*

## 2 People To Contact:

*Why this person? When will you contact them?*

## Notes:

*What worked? What didn't?*



# Building the Movement Together

Thank you for signing up for this Dance Advocacy Toolkit!

You now have so many practical tools to help you create meaningful change in dance spaces and beyond.

Remember—advocacy is not a solo endeavor. The most successful advocacy efforts are collective ones.

Keep in touch with us at Dance/USA, read our Advocacy Alert emails, and follow us on social media.

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