



OREGON ARTS  
COMMISSION

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### **Nichole Maher of Portland appointed to the Oregon Arts Commission**

Salem, Oregon – Nichole Maher, the president and CEO of Northwest Health Foundation, has been appointed to the Oregon Arts Commission by Gov. Kate Brown. Maher fills the position previously held by Julie Vigeland, who completed her second four-year term in July.

Previously the executive director of Portland’s Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Maher was raised in the small community of Siletz in Lincoln County and is very involved in supporting Native art and arts organizations. Since joining the Northwest Health Foundation in 2012, she has transformed it into a national forerunner in equity and a champion of supporting communities to build power through collaborative action and advocacy.

“We are thrilled to have Nichole join the Arts Commission as we continue the critical work of ensuring equity, access and inclusion through all of our programs and services,” said Commission Chair Christopher Acebo. “Though she now lives in Portland, Nichole is a champion for rural communities and is dedicated to supporting all of the rich cultures, histories and practices of the arts community.”

“I am particularly interested in ensuring that all parts of Oregon are included in arts development and that all have access to opportunity and funding,” said Maher. “I have a specific passion for ensuring that rural communities, communities with disabilities and racial and ethnic groups historically underserved have a seat at the table and access to resources.”

Maher holds a master's degree in public health from the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. She also completed a fellowship at Harvard Medical School and the Robert Wood Johnson Minority Medical Education program at Yale Medical School. She has received numerous leadership and industry honors, including Oregon’s 50 most powerful people, Oregon’s top 40 under 40, Portland’s 50 most influential people and the Oregon Women of Distinction award.

Born in Ketchikan, Alaska, Maher is also an active mother of three young children. She and her mother practice the traditional art of making button blankets, an important part of Northwest tribal culture.

Her four-year term began July 27.

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of the Oregon Business Development Department in 1993 in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities.

The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature, federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust.