

Occasional Paper #26

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support: Executive Summary

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A collaboration of Americans for the Arts and
The Ohio State University, Arts Policy and Administration Program
with support from Pew Charitable Trusts

Arts Policy Program Occasional Paper Series

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National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

September 30, 2002

Americans for the Arts
The Ohio State University, Arts Policy and Administration Program

With support from

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

Preface

The Pew Charitable Trusts commissioned National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support based on the premise that policy makers need good information in order to make effective decisions about resource allocations for culture, and that cultural advocates need reliable data to make a compelling, grounded case for support. This research was motivated in part by the Trusts' own experience that information about cultural funding patterns that might inform our own grantmaking policies was unavailable.

In 1995, we confronted the frustrating reality that accurate and comprehensive information about sources of support for culture in local communities was difficult to find. Specifically, we were interested in comparing local government funding of arts and culture in Philadelphia with such funding in other cities. The Trusts have a long history of support for the Philadelphia area cultural community, and as part of an evaluation of our local cultural grantmaking, we sought to get a better picture of how our level of giving interacted with other public and private support. We also wanted to see how Philadelphia government support for culture stacked up against comparable cities. We discovered that comprehensive information about local government support was not to be had; it was simply not being collected. And we asked ourselves, how are policy makers—be they philanthropies or government agencies—to make appropriate determinations about allocating their resources to cultural organizations and activities, if we are in the dark about even the most basic financial information?

This experience spurred the Trusts to explore, in a systematic fashion, how U.S. cultural policies are developed and implemented and, specifically, how we could assist in the establishment of a base of policy relevant data and information about American cultural resources. In 1998, the Trusts made a grant to Americans for the Arts to work in collaboration with The Ohio State University Department of Arts Policy and Administration to implement a multi-city and national study analyzing public and private sources of support for arts and culture. National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support is the result of that research.

One of the most important contributions of Profiles is the creation of an expansive definition of “culture” that includes nonprofit and for profit activity, incorporated and unincorporated groups, visual and performing arts, museums, arboreta and zoos, as well as service, educational and other support organizations. In other words, arts and culture, broadly defined, can be thought of as an identifiable sector present in every community and understandable in both economic and quality of life terms. Viewed this way, culture, writ large, becomes the domain of both policy makers and cultural advocates.

The Profiles report also documents the variety of means by which the nonprofit cultural sector is sustained. As the data from both local and national Profiles surveys shows, nonprofit cultural organizations are structurally dependent upon a diversified base of support, including earned income from multiple sources, contributed revenues from public and private entities as well as individuals, in-kind contributions of goods and services and volunteer labor. These various species of income and

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

support, none predominant and each with its own characteristics and constraints, combine to form a cultural ecology that is relatively durable but that would be seriously disrupted by the extinction of any one of them.

We hope that this report will prove useful to both policy makers and cultural advocates by increasing their appreciation that each piece of the system of cultural support is unique and necessary to the well-being of the sector. Especially by drawing attention to unexplored and under-recognized types of support, including in-kind support, the role of non-cultural government agencies and service organizations, we hope that it will spark discussions about how cultural vitality can be enhanced in communities across the country.

Finally, we hope that this report will be used to forge stronger partnerships between policy makers and cultural advocates to help their communities thrive.

Marian A. Godfrey
Director, Culture Program
The Pew Charitable Trusts
July, 2002

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

Introduction

More Americans attend arts events each year, the number of arts organizations and employed artists is increasing, and public investment in the arts is estimated at \$3 billion annually. Yet despite being deeply embedded in communities and in the lives of citizens, the financial dimensions of the arts are little understood by policymakers or the general public. Unlike many spheres of American society (education, health, or the environment, for example), the arts and cultural sector suffers from a dearth of reliable, intelligible, and comparable information—the critical ingredients for effective policy development. Such data and information provide a “common currency” of language for public policy makers, individual donors, corporate donors, private philanthropies, and industry professionals alike, enabling meaningful dialogue about the societal value of the arts, access to the arts, and support of the arts.

The National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support study was conducted by Americans for the Arts and The Ohio State University to document the patterns and sources of support to the nonprofit arts and culture sector in the U.S. A national survey of nonprofit arts organizations details the presence and prominence of 22 public, private, and earned revenue categories. Additional survey research conducted in ten diverse communities demonstrates both the variations and the similarities in arts support in various locales. Taken together, these investigations contribute four new and fundamental tools to the arts policy discussion:

1. A research-based benchmark of the patterns and sources of financial support to nonprofit arts organizations—providing an answer to the question, *How is the arts and cultural sector supported in the U.S.?*
2. The first systematic, multi-city examination of how non-arts government agencies support the arts (a sheriff’s department that takes at-risk youth to the ballet or public art funded by the transportation agency, for example). Results from this investigation suggest that local government investment in the arts has been significantly underestimated.
3. The development of a methodical approach to defining what kinds of organizations are included in the universe of the arts and cultural sector—one that allows for local variation as well as facilitates site-to-site comparisons.
4. A comparative examination of the different parts of the nonprofit arts and cultural sector and how, for example, service and support organizations are distinct from producing and presenting organizations.

Support for the arts in the United States can be characterized as a *mosaic* of funding sources—an observation clearly underscored by the Profiles Project. The Profiles project reveals both the complexity of the arts funding picture as well as the value of each of its composites (10 of the 22 revenue categories each represent 3 percent or more of total income). Taken together, these research findings have important implications for public policy makers, funders, and other industry stakeholders:

- Comprehensive data on funding sources improves the quality of community planning, grantmaking, and cultural policy development efforts and enables changes in the cultural community to be tracked over time.

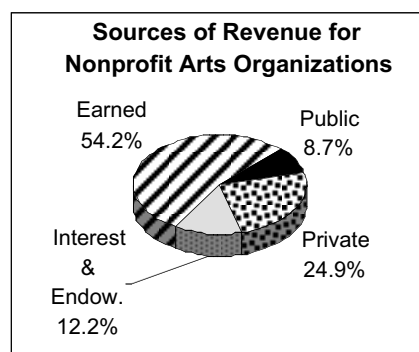
National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

- Reliable information improves the quality of the public dialogue about the arts by providing concrete facts to what is often an abstract discussion.
- Funding benchmarks can be used by arts administrators to compare their organizations and even their communities to other locales.
- Reliable data collected consistently over time will increase the likelihood that arts and culture become prominent components in quality-of-life and city livability indicators.

The Profiles Project was a research collaboration between Americans for the Arts and the Arts Policy and Administration Program at The Ohio State University and was conducted between 1999 and 2001. The study was supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the local arts agency research partners in ten communities across the country--Amery, WI; Cleveland, OH; Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Nashville, TN; New Orleans, LA; Philadelphia, PA; Montgomery County, MD; Providence, RI; San Jose, CA.

Sources of Revenue for Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations

While the majority of public policy debates about the nonprofit arts center on financial support, little longitudinal funding data exists about the sector, and much of what exists is collected using inconsistent methods. To address this shortfall, the Profiles Project included a national survey of nonprofit arts organizations to collect detailed data about 22 revenue categories (fiscal 1998 data). The findings provide an important benchmark measure of arts funding.



- Earned income (e.g., ticket sales, memberships, advertising) represents the largest portion of revenue for nonprofit arts organizations—54.2 percent.
 - Investment income (interest, endowments) is 12.2 percent of revenue.
 - Private sector contributions (individuals, foundations, corporations & other private) represent 24.9 percent of total revenue.
 - Public sources (federal, state, and local governments) represent the smallest portion of revenue (8.7 percent).
- The private sector (individuals, foundations, corporations) is a cornerstone of support for nonprofit arts organizations, providing an impressive 25 percent of their total revenue. And, according to data from the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel (which publishes the *Giving USA* reports), this support is growing. But a simultaneous trend has emerged that is cause for concern. While private sector giving to the arts grew 31.4 percent nationally between 1990-2000, total private giving increased at a more robust rate of 50.2 percent. Thus, the arts actually lost market share in private giving. This “illusion of growth” is an issue that should be discussed by the foundation and corporate funding community to determine the reason for this slippage. More arts funding research, such as the Profiles Project, could provide useful information for these conversations.

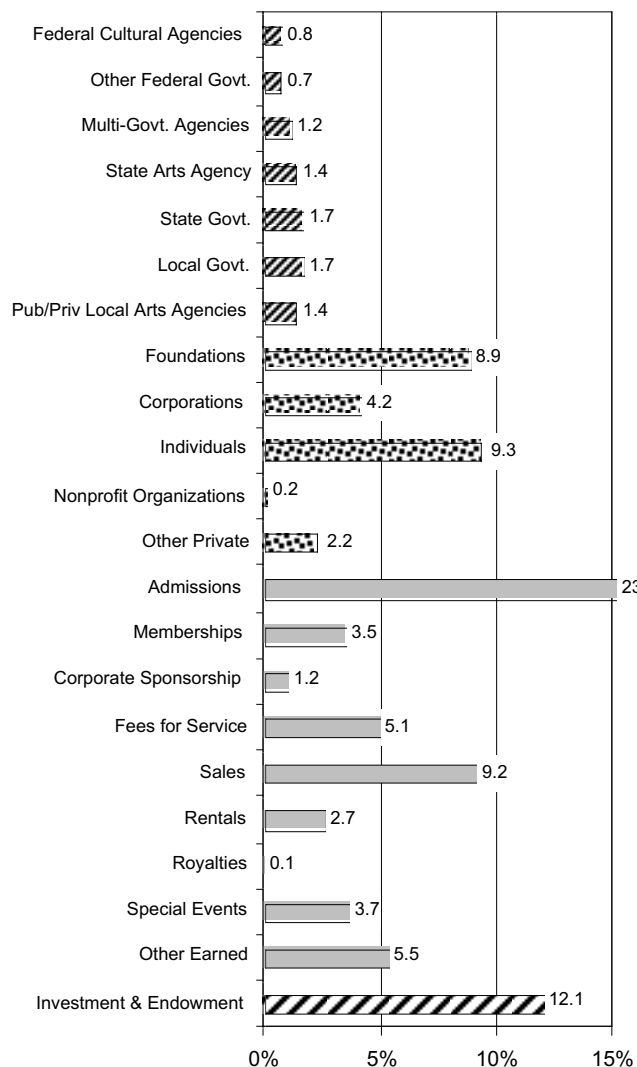
National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

- The Profiles data clearly indicate the importance of income earned from interest and endowments (12.2 percent of organizational revenues). As policymakers, funders, and philanthropists seek long-term solutions for support of the sector, the data suggest that building endowments can be an effective means for accomplishing this goal. Additionally, with the transfer of wealth between generations expected to be in the tens-of-billions of dollars in the coming decades, nonprofit advocates should champion inheritance and other tax legislation that is favorable for the development of new foundations, endowment building, planned giving, and other sector-stabilizing policies.

Detailed Revenue Patterns

- In the area of Earned Income, *admissions* is the largest single source of revenue (23.1 percent). It is, however, just one of many strategies organizations use to earn income. Others include *sponsorships*, *royalties*, and *sales* and *rentals*.
- Among Private sources of revenue, *foundation* and *individual* contributions each account for approximately 9 percent of total revenue, while *corporations* contribute 4.2 percent. Increasingly, corporations are changing or supplementing their arts support with *corporate sponsorships* (underwriting a specific performance, for example). This latter category (1.2 percent) is classified under Earned, not Private, making total corporate support 6.4 percent.
- Public arts support is composed of federal (1.5 percent), state (3.1 percent), local (3.1 percent), and multi-government agencies (1.2 percent). An example of a multi-government agency that funds the arts is the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA).

Detailed Revenue Distribution for Nonprofit Arts Organizations in U.S.



National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

Revenue Patterns by Arts Discipline

There are distinct revenue differences between organizations from different disciplines. For the national survey, arts organizations were clustered into three major arts discipline groups to examine the differences in sources of support: performing arts (opera, theater, and dance), museums/visual arts (galleries and a range of museums such as arts, science, and history), and multi-purpose arts organizations (local arts agencies, organizations that present both performances *and* exhibitions).

Arts Revenue by Discipline	Earned	Private	Public	Interest & Endowment
Performing	59.2%	29.5%	8.6%	2.6%
Museums/Visual Arts	49.2%	24.1%	8.8%	17.9%
Multipurpose	60.3%	23.7%	8.8%	7.1%

- Earned revenue is the largest revenue stream across the three discipline categories. It is smallest for museums/visual arts organizations (49.2 percent) and highest for multipurpose organizations (60.3 percent).
 - Public funding is virtually identical across the three groups (8.6 to 8.8 percent).
 - Museums/visual arts organizations receive the largest percentage of revenue from endowments and interest (17.9 percent), multipurpose organizations receive 7.1 percent, and performing arts organizations receive just 2.6 percent.
- The Profiles Project underscores the generally understood variation between performing arts organizations and museum/visual arts organizations: specifically, performing organizations have a higher percentage of earned revenue. Further, the performing arts have a much lower proportion of interest and endowment income. These are important distinctions for policymakers and others involved in the public discourse on sector support to understand. The operations, organizational structures, and business models are very different between these types of organizations. The data suggest that attempts to establish uniform revenue standards for nonprofit arts organizations (as a condition for grantmaking, for example) should be avoided.

Community-to-Community Comparisons

The revenue picture differs by community as well as by arts discipline. To gauge this variation, each of the ten local research sites replicated the national survey within their community. While all ten communities differed in revenue ratio categories, three distinct patterns of support became evident:

1. Earned-Income Dominant: In five of the ten communities, earned revenue exceeded 50 percent and was clearly the largest funding stream with the others similarly distributed (Amery, WI, Cleveland, Montgomery County, MD, New Orleans, and Providence).
2. Earned-Private Dominant: In three of the communities, earned revenue was dominant (greater than 50 percent) and private revenue constituted a considerable portion of income—approximately 30 percent (Miami, Nashville, San Jose).

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

3. **Diversified:** Philadelphia and Los Angeles, two of the largest cities in the U.S., demonstrated a more evenly mixed revenue picture with no clear dominant piece of the pie.

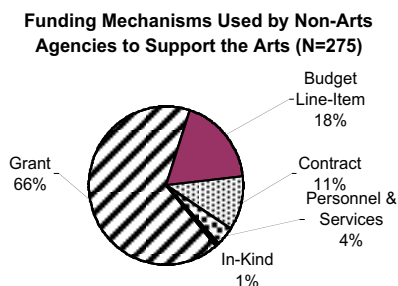
- The cross-community comparisons suggest a cautious approach when comparing one city to another. The Diversified category, perhaps predictably, captures two of the largest cities in the country. The Earned-Income Dominant group, however, encompasses a highly diverse range of cities. It is not completely clear what factors cause these variations. Questions as to how and why communities vary in their sources of support should continue to be investigated with consideration given to factors such as a strong/weak corporate community, differences in population, proximity to large urban centers, existence of a strong for-profit entertainment sector, and cultural and ethnic diversity.

Non-Arts Agency Support for the Arts

When describing public arts funding, typically reported sources include designated arts agencies, line item allocations to specific organizations, or dedicated and local option taxes (sales or hotel taxes for the arts, percent for art, or arts license plates). It's long been known, however, that this funding accounts for only a portion of total local, state, and federal government investment in the arts. "Non-arts" government agencies (housing, economic development, public safety) also provide grants, contracts for services, and contributions of personnel and services. For example, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department takes troubled youth to the ballet and the theater; live performances in Nashville's airport make airline travel a more pleasant experience; and Montgomery County's social services department teaches senior citizens about alcohol abuse through theater.

The Profiles Project includes the first systematic, multi-city examination of non-arts agency government support to the arts. Local research teams in seven of the ten communities conducted in-depth interviews with individuals responsible for providing 13 key public services (see table below).

- Some 275 cases of support were found in each of the seven communities, including at least one incident of support with each of the 13 agency types. Libraries showed the greatest frequency with 36 cases (13 percent of the total) while transportation had the lowest frequency with eight cases (3 percent of total).
- Who initiated the funding relationship? In 43 percent of the cases, the arts organization made the initial contact to the government agency, while in 25 percent of the cases, the government agency made the overture. Interestingly, 26 percent indicated that the project was initiated jointly, suggesting a previously established relationship.
- More than half of the respondents (57 percent) indicated that the surveyed year's level of arts support (fiscal 2000) was the same as the previous year's level of support—with 35 percent indicating that the current year is higher than the previous one.
- Grants given directly to artists or arts organizations were used in two-thirds of the incidences of support (66 percent). Line-item allocations in the department



National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

budgets (18 percent), contracts for services (11 percent), contribution of personnel or services (4 percent), and in-kind services (1 percent) are the remaining common mechanisms identified.

- These data suggest that local government support for the sector is significantly underestimated. Policy researchers should continue to investigate non-arts agency arts support on the federal, state, and local levels to (1) determine a more accurate measure of public investment in the arts; (2) develop funding models for other communities to emulate, thus increasing arts support; (3) educate different agency leaders about the value of the arts; and (4) increase the knowledge base of arts administrators as they seek funding alternatives.

➤ **What Non-Arts Agencies are Most Likely to Fund**

Type of Agency	Most Likely to Support . . .
1. Administrative Services	Promotional materials and advertising
2. Community Planning/Economic Dev.	Percent for art, (re)design of public buildings
3. Convention and Visitor's Bureau	Promotional materials and advertising
4. School District	Youth arts programs
5. Fire Department	Public safety at festivals and events
6. Police/Public Safety	Youth programs, public safety at festivals and events
7. Justice/Courts	Youth programs, both in school and after school
8. Libraries	A venue for performing arts events and festivals
9. Parks and Recreation	Promotional materials and advertising, arts classes
10. Housing	Community development
11. Public Works	Percent for art, support for facilities
12. Social Services/Social Welfare	Arts classes, youth programs
13. Transportation	Arts shuttles, public art in transit facilities

- Arts administrators should consider these findings as a new funding and support guide. In San Jose, CA, for example, arts organizations working with youth are able to access \$400,000 per year from the city's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services agency, which is committed to the arts as a way to support livable neighborhoods and improve quality of life in community. The agency spends an additional \$700,000 to support arts classes, festivals, and special activities at their community and senior centers.

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

Volunteers and In-Kind Support

Financial contributions are not the only method used to support the arts. The Profiles data indicate that, nationally, 81 percent of nonprofit arts organizations receive contributed assets or services (in-kind donations) from public and private sources.

- The larger the organization's budget, the more likely it is to receive in-kind support from corporations—most commonly in the form of advertising and printing services.
- In-kind support from government sources is most often facilities or advertising.
- Nonprofit arts organizations support each other through contributions of facilities or performance spaces.
- The 800 responding organizations in the national survey reported more than 21 million volunteer hours in 1998. The local sites varied considerably, ranging from 1,600 hours in Amery to 460,000 in New Orleans.

- Given the value of in-kind contributions to the nonprofit arts sector, strikingly little data has been collected about it. A more systematic tracking by both funding and research entities would provide a clearer picture of what exists as well as bring greater awareness to service providers about how they can support arts organizations.
- In-kind contributions and volunteerism clearly play a critical role in maintaining the stability of the nonprofit arts sector. Advocates should constantly push tax policies that provide incentives to volunteers and contributors.

The Role of Service Organizations

Service and support organizations make up nearly 20 percent of the arts and cultural sector—4,316 of the 22,000 nonprofit arts, culture and humanities organizations tracked by the Internal Revenue Service. These are nonprofit organizations that provide funding, technical assistance, advocacy, promotion, research and other services that stabilize and sustain arts organizations and cultural communities.

- More than half of these organizations provide direct funding support. Examples include local arts agencies; patron guilds and foundations for museums and performing arts organizations; and domestic and international art funds, artist foundations and parent/teacher support groups.
- Arts education organizations, another significant part of the sector, number 550. They include both formal educational institutions as well as organizations providing educational services to schools and the general public.
- Professional membership associations number more than 700, including approximately 300 national associations and 400 local, state and regional groups.
- Specialized service providers number close to 250 and include Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, local business volunteer and accounting service groups, specialized research groups and archives, art conservation services, design centers, and artist colonies. The smallest components of the service

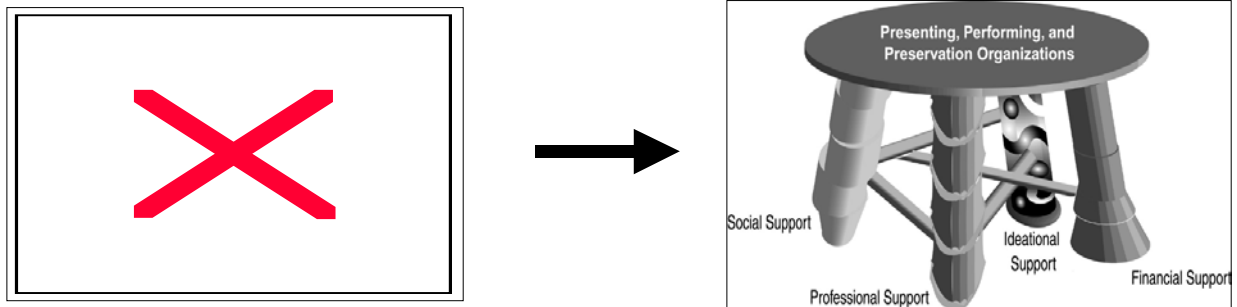
National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

organization cluster are non-monetary support groups (such as women's art leagues or docent groups) and political advocacy/policy organizations.

A More Inclusive Model of Support to the Arts and Cultural Sector

Financial support for the arts and cultural sector is typically counted as coming from four distinct sources: private contributions (individuals, corporations and foundations), direct government funds, earned income, and investment and endowment funds. As the Profiles Project progressed through its many stages of planning, research, and analysis, that model evolved into a more complex, interdependent model consisting of three additional support systems, each of which is multi-faceted:

- The social support system highlights audience development, public opinion, and voluntary action, skills, and responsibilities.
- The professional support system highlights the role of specialized services ranging from Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts to art conservation services, and mutual support systems for peer exchange, professional development that professional associations and unions provide.
- The ideational system reminds us of the importance of intellectual capital in a variety of forms as well as the importance of policy development, advocacy, legal regulation and professional codes of ethics as part of the infrastructure of the sector.



While each of these systems can be conceived to be free standing, in reality there are connections and “cross-supports” between them. Thus, the new model that emerges would seem likely to strengthen the overall infrastructure so that weaknesses or erosions in any one system might gain added strength from its connections to the others.

- For example, one can envision a cross-support between professional and trade associations (professional support system) and the advocacy activities of those in the ideational system. Thus, work done by the professional system strengthens the ideational system.
- Similarly, one could expect numerous cross-connections between the individualized attitudes and voluntary action of the social support system and many of the components of the financial support pillar (e.g., individual donations, earned income, and in-kind contributions).
- Conversely, there are linkages between public funding (support system) and the advocacy capacities of the ideational pillar.

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

Clearly, this new model suggests a more complex and interdependent support system for the arts and cultural sector. By developing this more inclusive and sophisticated model of the infrastructure of support for arts and cultural organizations, we not only acquire theoretical breadth but also gain a deeper understanding of how the financial support system works.

Conclusion

The National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support project presents a clear and detailed revenue picture of America's nonprofit arts and cultural sector and demonstrates that the sector is structurally dependent upon a diversified base of support from both public and private sources. The Profiles Project also demonstrates for the first time the sizable role of local non-arts government agencies in support of the arts, suggesting that this important revenue stream is significantly underestimated nationally.

As with most new research, the Profiles Project yields as many new questions as it does answers. What accounts for the wide variety of sources and forms of support for the arts in different communities? How does the relative strength of corporate communities affect arts support? What roles do population, proximity to large urban centers, or the existence of a strong for-profit entertainment sector play?

To fully capitalize on the investment of time and resources marshaled to produce the Profiles Project, these questions must be revisited every few years. With a baseline of financial data in hand, changes in arts funding can be measured over time, with a result that policies might be better calibrated to ensure stable funding and the long-term health of the sector.

About this Study

- **National Survey**: The national survey of nonprofit arts organizations collected data about fiscal 1998 revenues and was conducted by the Survey Research Center at The Ohio State University. The universe of organizations was taken from a national database of IRS Form 990s (the Return Transaction File maintained by the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute). Out of a universe of 10,657 organizations, 3,830 were randomly selected and sent a survey, of which there were 796 usable responses (21 percent). It should be noted that only organizations with a budget of \$25,000 or more are obligated to file an IRS Form 990. Therefore, small organizations are not represented in the national survey data.
- **Local Survey**: The local arts revenue survey was conducted in each of the ten communities by a local research team under the supervision of the Profiles Project research director. Because every community is different in the types of organizations it includes in its arts and cultural sector, each was allowed to expand its survey universe to reflect its local definition. Therefore, there is some variation in each community's survey universe. For example, while there is little disagreement that the art museum is a core part of the sector, there is less agreement about scientific museums, living collections (zoos or botanical gardens), arts service organizations (such as Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts), or unincorporated entities (a jazz quartet or a church choir). Following a rigorous identification and coding of the organizations using the National Taxonomy of Exempt

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

Entities, organizations were sent a survey to collect revenue data for the fiscal year 1998. Response rates among the communities ranged from 20 percent to 100 percent.

- Non-Arts Government Agency Funding: Investigation of funding by non-arts agencies involved using a semi-structured interview process with an authorized representative of each local government agency responsible for delivering the 13 services. This method features a few guiding questions and prompts to get the interviewee talking. This protocol was developed by the entire national and local Profiles Project research team, enabling the project to capitalize on a brain trust of government agency directors, academic researchers, and arts practitioners. This phase also benefited from the contributions by the research director at the National Association of Counties.

10 Community Research Partners

In each community, the local arts agency teamed with a local research entity with the two-fold purpose of (1) ensuring that sound and reliable research was conducted locally and (2) developing new or strengthening existing arts-research partnerships.

1. Amery, Wisconsin
Northern Lakes Center for the Arts and Case Western Reserve University's Mandell Center for Nonprofit Organizations
2. Cleveland, Ohio
Community Partnership for Arts and Culture, The Cleveland Foundation, and Case Western Reserve University's Mandell Center for Nonprofit Organizations
3. Los Angeles, California
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and ARTS Inc.
4. Miami, Florida
Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council and Florida International University
5. Nashville, Tennessee
Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission and Middle Tennessee State University
6. New Orleans, Louisiana
Arts Council of New Orleans and University of New Orleans
7. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and Drexel University
8. Montgomery County, Maryland
Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County and Johns Hopkins University
9. Providence, Rhode Island
Rhode Island State Council on the Arts and Northeastern University
10. San Jose, California
City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs

National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support

For More Information

To learn more about the National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support project:

1. A detailed 400-page report and a 40-page condensed report are both available on the websites of Americans for the Arts, The Ohio State University Arts Policy and Administration Program, and The Pew Charitable Trusts:
www.AmericansForTheArts.com
www.arts.ohio-state.edu/ArtEducation/APA/
www.pewtrusts.com
2. The fall 2002 issue of the *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* will focus on the National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support project (www.heldref.org/html/body_jamls.html).
3. The data collected for this study are available for use by researchers and can be found at the Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive (CPANDA) at Princeton University (www.princeton.edu/~sbwhite/cpanda.html).

The principal investigator for the National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support study, Dr. Margaret Wyszomirski, can be contacted at wyszomirski.1@osu.edu.