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LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES 2010

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The arts in America are more accessible to the public now than at any time in the nation's history. This is due, in large part, to the remarkable growth and impact of the nation's local arts agencies—community-based organizations that integrate the arts into the daily fabric of their communities and ensure cultural vitality. In just the past 50 years, the number of local arts agencies (LAAs) has blossomed from 400 to 5,000. Once primarily nonprofit, volunteer-driven organizations that presented programming, they are now a mix of public and private agencies that leverage billions of dollars in support to advance the arts, ensuring broad access to the arts and improving the quality of their community. This *Monograph* features the findings from our 2010 Census on Local Arts Agencies, offering a glimpse at the state of the field nationwide.



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As the national service organization for America's local arts agencies, Americans for the Arts has been working with local arts agencies (LAAs) for 50 years. During that time, LAAs have evolved and grown into a diverse field of organizations that can be loosely categorized as those organizations in a community that work to foster and support the arts. As each LAA is uniquely designed to meet the needs of the community it serves, the mission and operations of one LAA may not align with the mission and operations of another LAA the next town over. Consider this *Monograph* your resource for answers about the diverse local arts agency sector, and let it serve as an excellent primer for anyone interested in founding a local arts agency in their community.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SPOTLIGHT

The City of Providence, Department of Art, Culture + Tourism focuses on bringing arts into community life. The department is spearheading a new project, Creative Providence: A Cultural Plan for the Creative Sector, which calls for "investment in neighborhood art, culture, and creativity to sustain diversity and engage communities." The cultural plan points to some of the opportunities and challenges facing Providence: that arts organizations support and serve the many cultures in Providence's neighborhoods and yet, for many of its residents, limited money, education, and transportation prevent them from fully accessing and participating in arts and cultural opportunities.

To achieve the objective of cross-cultural community engagement, the department is working with community leaders to curate and present summer showcases of the art of local neighborhoods in city parks throughout the summer. "Partnering with neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations to bring cultural programming to our parks allows us to offer a range of high-quality arts experiences while encouraging shared ownership of our cultural life and a sense of civic pride in public spaces throughout the city," said Lynne McCormack, director of the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism.

Through this and other efforts, Providence is working toward the following outcomes:

- Arts, culture, and creativity will be present in each neighborhood as a lifelong creative learning and community-building strategy.
- Public policies and private programs will empower people to express their own creativity and explore their individual cultural curiosity.
- Each neighborhood will have a signature cultural center that utilizes the existing civic architecture: public libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and community centers.
- All people should feel welcome—socially, physically, economically, and intellectually—and have opportunities to participate in cultural offerings that represent and reinforce the many cultures and wide-range of creative practices present throughout the city.
- Cultural life will attract people to, and link together, Providence's neighborhoods.