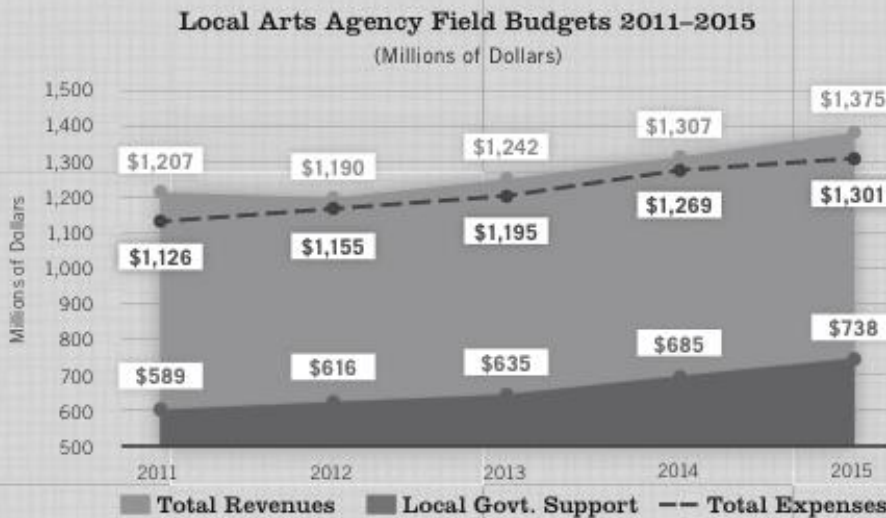


# LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES IN AMERICA: 2016

Americans are more engaged in the arts now than ever. The reason? The remarkable growth and impact of our nation's 4,500 local arts agencies—nonprofit organizations and municipal agencies ensuring the arts have a vital presence in communities.



Local arts agencies (LAAs) provide programs, services, and funding to strengthen their local arts industries and make the arts accessible to all. Each LAA is unique to its community, so no two are exactly alike. What they share is the goal of enabling diverse forms of arts and culture to thrive, ensuring accessibility and stronger communities through the arts. Since 1960, the number of LAAs has grown from 400 to 4,500. LAAs are now found in every state and serve populations that range from small rural to large urban.

## LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES BY THE NUMBERS

- 67 percent had **LEVEL OR INCREASED BUDGETS** between 2014 and 2015.
- 78 percent provide **PROGRAMMING** like public art, hands-on arts centers, and festivals.
- 92 percent **COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**; 76 percent have three or more ongoing collaborations.
- 89 percent deliver **ARTS EDUCATION** programs and services in the schools and community.
- 53 percent provide **GRANTS** to artists and/or arts organizations.
- 28 percent have done **CULTURAL PLANS**, assessing the cultural needs of the community and mapping an implementation plan.
- 59 percent manage **CULTURAL FACILITIES**, including performance and exhibition spaces and arts incubators.



[www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LocalArtsAgencyCensus](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LocalArtsAgencyCensus) ©2016

The Local Arts Agency Census is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

25 Highlights from the Local Arts Agency Census ..... 4

1. Service Areas ..... 6

2. Expenditures, Revenues, and Local Government Funding ..... 7

3. LAA Organization Names and Leadership Titles ..... 8

4. Legal Status ..... 9

5. Public LAAs within Government ..... 10

6. LAA Staff ..... 10

7. Board and Staff Composition ..... 11

8. Cultural Programming ..... 13

9. Community Development Programs ..... 14

10. Partnerships and Collaborations ..... 15

11. Advocacy and Strategic Messaging ..... 18

12. Services to Arts Organizations ..... 20

13. Services to Individual Artists ..... 21

14. Services to the General Public ..... 22

15. Audience Engagement ..... 23

16. Arts Education Programs ..... 24

2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

17. Public Art ..... 25

18. Community and Cultural Planning ..... 26

19. Grantmaking ..... 27

20. Facility Management ..... 28

21. Sources of Revenue ..... 29

22. Funding Innovations ..... 30

23. Expenditures ..... 31

24. Services to the Business Community ..... 32

25. Awards and Community Recognition ..... 33

Local Arts Agencies Looking to the Future ..... 34

About Americans for the Arts ..... 35

LAA Task Force Members ..... 36

## 25 HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

Americans for the Arts defines a local arts agency (LAA) as a private organization or an agency of local government that promotes, supports, and develops the arts at the local level. LAAs are not discipline-specific—rather, they work to sustain their entire local arts industry. Each of the 4,500 LAAs in America is unique to the community that it serves and each evolves with its community—no two are exactly alike.

In 2015, Americans for the Arts partnered with the National Endowment for the Arts to conduct The Local Arts Agency Census, the most comprehensive survey of the local arts agency (LAA) field ever conducted. Its purpose was to illuminate the ever adapting role LAAs play in ensuring the arts have a vital presence in every community.

The survey process was designed by a task force of local arts agency, research, and policy leaders to ensure relevance and rigor. The Census was composed of both a long-form survey and a short-form survey that were sent to the 4,377 LAAs in the United States known to Americans for the Arts. A total of 1,127 LAAs responded (641 submitted the long-form; 486 participated via the short-form), providing invaluable details about their budgets, programs, partnerships, grantmaking, diversity, and staffing. While the overall response rate was 26 percent, the rate of response from large- and mid-sized LAAs was very high, while small and volunteer-driven LAAs were under-represented in the survey respondents.

The most important aspect that all LAAs share is the goal of enabling diverse forms of arts and culture to thrive, ensuring their broad accessibility to the public and building healthier communities through the arts. To accomplish this work, LAAs are involved in some or all of the following:

- Policy and advocacy: 95 percent champion policies and funding for broader and more equitable access to the arts.
- Partnerships: 92 percent collaborate with a community agency or organization; 76 percent have three or more ongoing collaborations.
- Grantmaking: 53 percent provide direct community investment in local artists and/or arts organizations.

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

- Facility management: 59 percent manage cultural facilities such as performance and exhibition spaces, and arts incubators.
- Cultural programming: 78 percent engage their community in the arts through direct programming such as public art, hands-on arts centers, and festivals.
- Arts services: 95 percent enable vibrant arts communities through services such as marketing, visibility, volunteer recruitment, online arts calendars.
- Arts education: 89 percent deliver arts education programs and activities in the schools and community-wide.

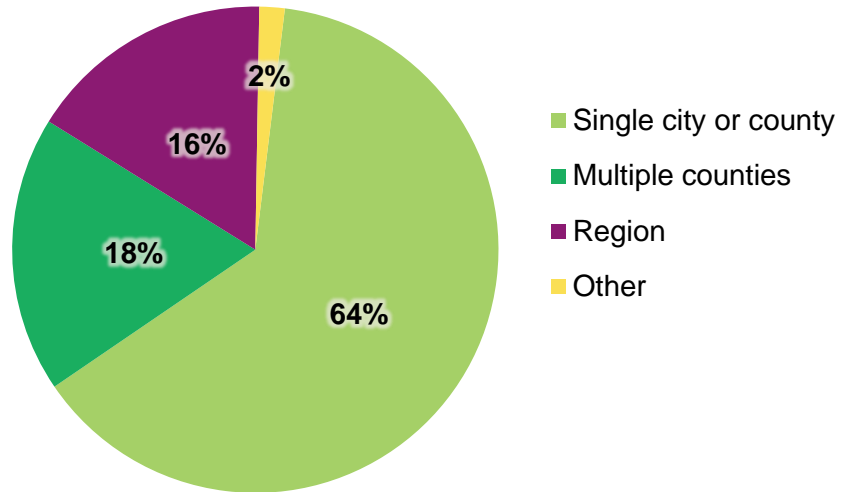
While LAAs across the country share the same goals and many tactics to achieve them, the LAA Census sheds light on the intricacies of the field. This report, *25 Highlights from the Local Arts Agency Census*, offers a broad overview of the findings and paints a portrait of the programs, budgets, and operations of the LAA field as of 2015. Americans for the Arts will publish a series of LAA Census topic-based findings throughout 2016 on specific areas such as board and staff diversity, public art, arts education, and innovative funding streams.

## 25 HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Service Areas

Since 1960, the number of LAAs in the United States has grown more than 10-fold, from 400 to 4,500. The greatest rate of growth was during the 1970s and 1980s. LAAs are found in all 50 states plus Washington, DC, serving populations that range from small rural to suburban to large urban. Their annual budgets range from all-volunteer to \$156 million for the LAA with the largest budget in the country.

LAA Service Areas



- LAAs serve geographic areas that can cover a single city or county (64 percent), multiple counties (18 percent), regions (16 percent), and other areas such as neighborhoods (2 percent).
- Some communities have multiple LAAs that work to meet different needs for their constituents. The people of Philadelphia, for example, are served by three: Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (nonprofit organization); Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia (an affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce); and City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (a city agency).

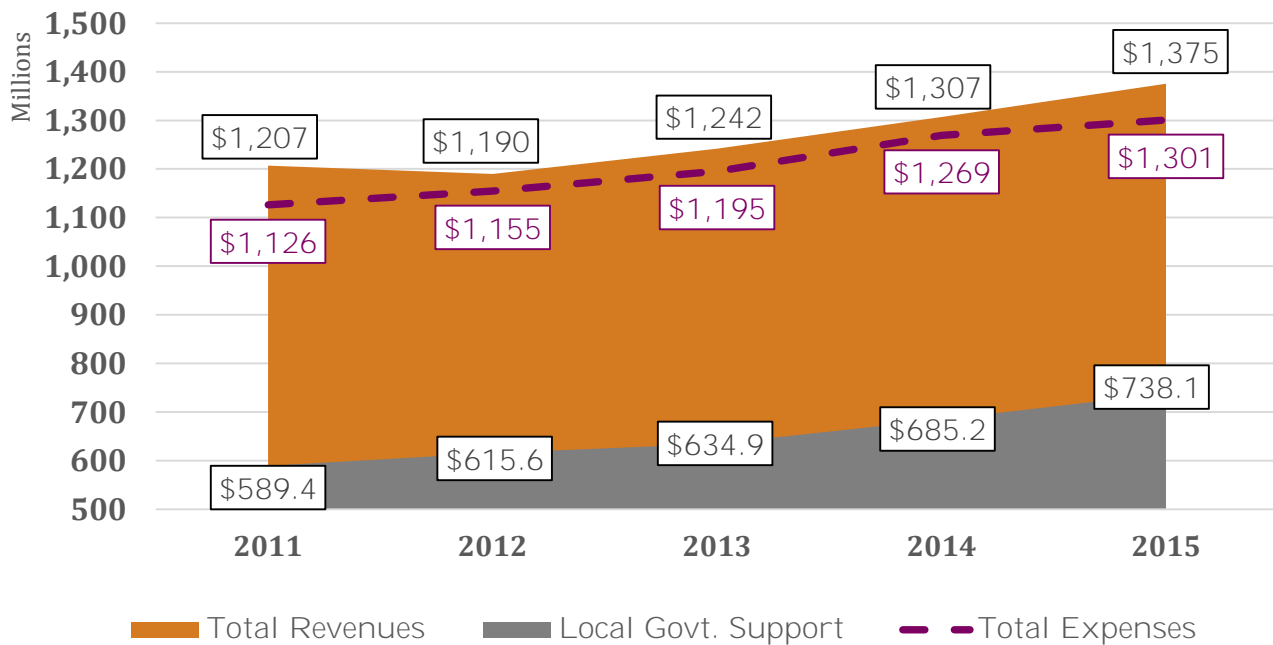
# 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

## 2. Expenditures, Revenues, and Local Government Funding

Aggregate revenues for all 1,127 responding LAAs totaled \$1.375 billion in 2015, and their total expenses were \$1.301 billion. This was the fourth consecutive year of growth in total budgets and local government support. These budget figures are conservative as they include only the 1,127 survey respondents.

- At the end of their last fiscal year, the majority of LAAs had surpluses (48 percent) or break even budgets (31 percent), while only about a one-in-five (21 percent) reported more expenses than revenues.
- Between 2014 and 2015, 67 percent of LAAs had level or increased budgets.
- In 2015, arts funding from local government sources (city and/or county) grew for the fourth consecutive year to \$738 million.

Local Arts Agency Field Budgets 2011 - 2015  
(Millions of Dollars)



## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 3. LAA Organization Names and Leadership Titles

A local arts agency does not always go by that name. This is a broad cross-section from the LAA Census Respondents:

- ArtsWave (Cincinnati, OH)
- Office of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy (Philadelphia, PA)
- Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (Cleveland, OH)
- Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Commission (NJ)
- North Texas Business for Culture and the Arts (TX)
- Arts & Science Council of Charlotte/Mecklenburg (NC)
- Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission (MD)
- Centro Cultural de Washington County (OR)
- Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts and Parks Program (UT)
- 4Culture (King County, WA)

Local arts agency leaders have different titles, too. Here are some examples we found:

- Chief Cultural Officer
- Cultural Affairs Manager
- Director of Community Development
- Director of Economic Development, Cultural Affairs & Tourism
- Heritage, Culture & the Arts Manager
- Neighborhood Services Coordinator
- Public Arts Coordinator
- Superintendent of Cultural Arts
- Recreation Supervisor
- Arts and Events Manager



# 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

## 4. Legal Status

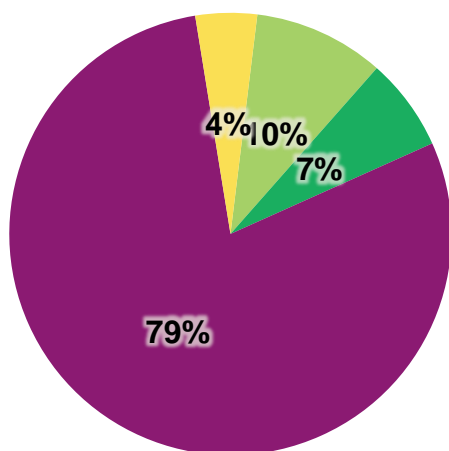
Until recently, most private, nonprofit LAAs were likely to be found in smaller communities, and public LAAs were found in medium- and larger-sized communities. The 2015 Census data, however, show a more equal distribution of public and private agencies across population categories. What does remain true is that most are private, nonprofit organizations (71 percent) and about three in 10 (29 percent) are part of the local government.

Private LAAs: Of the responding private LAAs, 94 percent operate independently, 4 percent under the umbrella of another organization (e.g. a Chamber of Commerce), and 2 percent selected 'other.' Nearly all are 501(c)(3) nonprofits (96 percent) and almost half are designated by their local government as the official LAA for their community (46 percent).

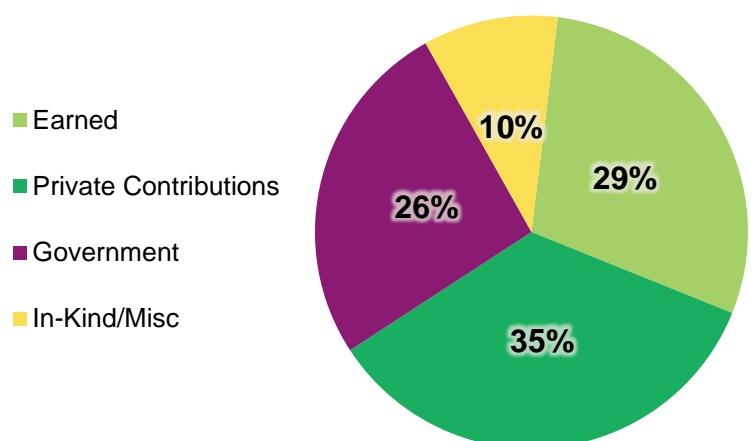
Revenues typically include a mixture of donations from individuals and businesses, foundation support, earned-income activities, and grants or service contracts from government. They are likely to be engaged in programs and services such as marketing, online art and event calendars, audience development, volunteer recruitment, board development, and individual giving. They partner extensively with non-arts community organizations as well as with local municipal agencies.

Public LAAs: Operate as part of the city or county and are located throughout the government at different jurisdictional levels: 79 percent are part of city, 17 percent of county, 3 percent are part of a unified city/county government, and 4 percent indicated another level such as a special state district. Their largest source of revenue is from local government, and their largest expenditure is for awarding grants and contracts to local artists and cultural institutions. They are heavily engaged in partnerships with other city agencies.

Public LAA Revenue Sources



Private LAA Revenue Sources



## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 5. Public LAAs within Government

Within local government, a quarter of public LAAs are stand-alone departments or agencies (e.g., a department of cultural affairs). The majority, however, are located under the umbrella of another government agency. One in five public LAAs (21 percent) is part of its community's Parks & Recreation department. Also notable is that 8 percent reside within its government's Economic Development department. In San Jose, for example, the Office of Cultural Affairs is part of the economic development department and the director reports directly to the Director of Economic Development.

### Where You Can Find Public LAAs

PUBLIC LAAS PARENT AGENCY/DEPARTMENT	
INDEPENDENT agency, department, division, program, or facility within the local government	25%
Parks & Recreation	21%
City/County Manager's Office	14%
Mayor's Office	9%
Economic Development	8%
Community Development	5%
Planning	3%
Tourism	2%
City/County Clerk (or similar)	1%
Other / not listed above	11%

### 6. LAA Staff

Three in four responding LAAs (77 percent) employ at least one paid year-round staff member (either full time or part time). Fifty-nine percent have at least one full-time paid staff person; 18 percent at least one part-time paid employee or contractor. The remaining 23 percent are run by year-round volunteers, such as board members (7 percent) or by seasonal paid or unpaid staff (15 percent).

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

Not surprisingly, the larger the organizational budget, the more likely the LAA is to have paid staff.

- Almost all (99 percent) LAAs with budgets of \$100,000 or more have year-round paid staff, either full-time or part-time. At that budget level, 88 percent of organizations have at least one full-time paid staff, 10 percent have at least one part-time paid staff, and 1 percent has no dedicated year-round staff<sup>1</sup>.
- Half of organizations with budgets of under \$100,000 (50 percent) have year-round paid staff who are either full-time or part-time. At that budget level, 23 percent have at least one full-time paid staff, 27 percent have at least one paid part-time staff, 33 percent have only seasonal staff, and 16 percent are run entirely by volunteers.

### 7. Board and Staff Composition

#### Staff

Of the 85 percent of LAAs that have at least one year-round staff member, either paid or volunteer, 39 percent have a written staff diversity policy. Most commonly, this policy refers to the hiring of the Executive Director (30 percent), support and senior staff (26 and 23 percent, respectively), and in some cases for volunteers (14 percent). LAAs also reported “other” diversity-related policies (8 percent), most commonly non-discrimination policies or adhering to city government hiring procedures.

Of all LAAs with staff, 19 percent have succession planning in place for their workforce. Most frequently this plan is in place for succession of the chief staff executive (16 percent), but some LAAs (5 percent) also have plans in place for other senior staff.

Staff and volunteer demographics at the average LAA<sup>2</sup>:

- 74 percent female and 26 percent male.

---

<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

<sup>2</sup> “The average LAA” means percentages were calculated first individually and then averaged for all LAAs to avoid assigning more weight to organizations with larger staffs, budgets etc.

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

- 83 percent of staff are non-Hispanic white, 6 percent are black/African-American, 4 percent Hispanic, and other races constitute 7 percent.
- 57 percent are 45 or older; 44 percent are younger than 45.

### Boards

Ninety-five percent of LAAs have a board of directors, commission, or another type of oversight group. Of those, less than one in three have written diversity policies for their boards.

- 29 percent of LAAs have a written diversity policy for their board of directors.
- 46 percent consider diversity in their board operations, but have no written policy.
- 25 percent do not take diversity into consideration when recruiting members.

Only half of LAAs with boards have board-related succession planning documents (50 percent). Thirty-one percent have it for all members, 13 percent for the board leadership, and 6 percent for the chairperson only. About a third of responding LAAs (32 percent) require a signed commitment letter from their board, and three-quarters (74 percent) have term limits in place.

Board demographics at the average LAA:

- Boards have a higher percentage of men than LAA staffs, but are still predominantly female. A typical board is 41 percent male and 59 percent female.
- 85 percent of board members are white/non-Hispanic, 6 percent black/African-American, and 4 percent Hispanic. Other races constitute only 5 percent.
- Boards tend to skew older compared to staff. In a typical board, only about a quarter (23 percent) are 44 or younger, more than half (55 percent) are between ages 45 and 64, and about one in five (22 percent) is 65 or older.

Lack of diversity is a topic about which LAA leadership is aware. When asked if their LAA currently has an appropriate level of diversity among the staff, board, and volunteers, 40 percent of LAAs disagreed, 35 percent agreed, and 26 percent had a neutral opinion. Interestingly, 56 percent of LAAs who “strongly agreed” that their organization has an appropriate level of diversity also have at least one written diversity hiring policy in place, compared to 39 percent of those who strongly disagree and have a written policy in place.

Percentage of LAA Leaders Who Believe Their Organizations Are Diverse Enough

<b>“MY LAA CURRENTLY HAS AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF DIVERSITY AMONG THE STAFF, BOARD, AND VOLUNTEERS.”</b>	
Level of Agreement	
Strongly Agree	12%
Somewhat Agree	23%
Neither Agree or Disagree (neutral)	26%
Somewhat Disagree	31%
Strongly Disagree	9%

8. Cultural Programming

Ninety-one percent of LAAs endeavor to directly connect their community to the arts by presenting their own cultural programming (78 percent) and/or by providing other organizations with funds for this purpose (50 percent). LAAs are typically the organizations responsible for providing cultural opportunities such as free concerts in the park, art exhibitions at city hall, public art, and festivals. Public LAAs are more likely than private LAAs to fund programming (65 percent vs. 44 percent), while private LAAs are more likely to present programming (83 percent vs. 67 percent).

Cultural programming by LAAs takes many forms:

- One of most common types of cultural programming supported by LAAs are the visual arts, by 71 percent of organizations. Of those, 54 percent fund them through grants or contracts and 71 percent present their own programming.
- Sixty percent of LAAs support theater programming, and they are more likely to do so by providing grants or contracts to others (65 percent) than by presenting theater programming themselves (50 percent).
- A quarter (24 percent) are involved with gap programming, targeting a specific underserved segment of the community or filling an arts discipline void. Of those, 68 percent do so by presenting programming, and 50 percent provide funding through grants or contracts.

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 9. Community Development Programs

Over half of LAAs (57 percent) are involved in using the arts to address community development issues ranging from youth at risk, homelessness, and illiteracy, to the creative economy, cultural districts, and civic engagement.

- 49 percent are directly involved in addressing community development issues through their own arts programming.
- 28 percent are indirectly involved—addressing key local issues through grants or contracts awarded to artists or arts organizations in their community.

#### Community Development Issues Addressed by LAAs

*\*Percentages calculated based on the number of LAAs who address these issues.*

	YES	OWN PROGRAMMING*	GRANT OR CONTRACT*
Tourism / community identity / branding	40%	86%	36%
Economic development	34%	86%	32%
Education	32%	81%	51%
Use of public space	29%	88%	39%
At-risk youth	28%	63%	60%
Cultural preservation	26%	68%	47%
Cultural or racial awareness	26%	67%	58%
Civic engagement	25%	79%	38%
Health, wellness, and medicine (mental)	16%	52%	63%
Aging	16%	54%	61%
Environmental issues	15%	64%	53%
Illiteracy / literacy	13%	54%	63%
Health, wellness, and medicine (physical)	11%	54%	60%
Local food movement	10%	66%	45%
Social equity	9%	61%	68%
Crime prevention / violence	8%	50%	70%
Homelessness	7%	27%	75%
Transportation	6%	68%	53%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

	YES	OWN PROGRAMMING*	GRANT OR CONTRACT*
Hunger / food justice	6%	54%	54%
Imprisonment/rehabilitation	6%	38%	65%
Immigration	5%	36%	70%
Housing	5%	34%	79%
Contested history	4%	50%	71%
Public safety	4%	63%	59%
Substance abuse	4%	46%	62%
Displacement	3%	42%	74%
Teen pregnancy	2%	27%	82%
Other / Miscellaneous / Not listed above	4%	75%	29%

### 10. Partnerships and Collaborations

LAAAs are community connectors. Ninety-two percent maintain at least one collaboration or partnership with public or community agencies such as a school district, Parks & Recreation Department, Social Services, Economic Development, or a Chamber of Commerce, and 76 percent have three or more ongoing collaborations.

Sixty percent (or higher) of LAAAs partnered with these six types of non-arts organizations:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Libraries
- Local arts agencies in other cities/states
- Convention and Tourism Bureaus
- Colleges/universities/higher education
- Schools

Because partnership and collaboration can mean different things to different people, we asked respondents to be specific about the actual work involved between the organizations. We offered five categories of partnership and collaboration, ranging from informal conversations to actively planning and funding programs together to the arts being fully integrated into the non-arts organizations work.

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

Responding LAAs were able to select more than one partnership level for each organization type. Not surprisingly, informal relationships are more common than the deeper and more rigorous ones. This is the first time this kind of question has been asked of the LAA field.

- 79 percent have "informal conversations" with partner organizations
- 65 percent "meet regularly" with partners
- 75 percent "work together to plan, fund, and implement programs"
- 31 percent fund a partner "through grants or contracts"
- 46 percent have a partner that has fully "integrated the arts into their initiatives"

### LAA Partnerships with Community Organizations

*\*Percentages calculated based on the number of LAAs who partner with these organizations.*

PARTNER	YES	TALK*	MEET*	WORK TOGETHER*	FUND THEM*	INTEGRATED THE ARTS*
Chambers of Commerce	66%	51%	28%	34%	3%	16%
Libraries	62%	44%	23%	47%	14%	26%
LAAs in other cities/states	62%	55%	35%	27%	4%	10%
Convention & Tourism Bureaus	62%	38%	35%	43%	3%	25%
Higher education	60%	40%	19%	48%	16%	22%
Museums	60%	39%	28%	36%	26%	18%
Schools	60%	37%	21%	53%	17%	21%
School districts	56%	41%	26%	52%	14%	24%
Historical societies	56%	51%	21%	33%	18%	11%
Parks and recreation departments	55%	36%	33%	50%	14%	26%
Economic development agencies	45%	51%	30%	32%	1%	16%
Community education orgs	43%	42%	23%	42%	18%	19%
Community development agencies	43%	45%	26%	38%	7%	15%
Main Street Associations	41%	39%	34%	43%	12%	23%
Cultural districts	34%	34%	32%	44%	13%	28%
Humanities organizations	29%	43%	22%	34%	23%	11%
Boys and Girls Club(s)	24%	47%	3%	26%	26%	19%



## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

PARTNER	YES	TALK*	MEET*	WORK TOGETHER*	FUND THEM*	INTEGRATED THE ARTS*
Economic Development Corps.	24%	46%	31%	34%	1%	11%
Faith-based organizations	22%	73%	11%	19%	12%	7%
Healthcare providers	21%	56%	11%	33%	9%	23%
Film commission	20%	54%	17%	23%	17%	20%
Sister Cities	19%	56%	17%	36%	9%	10%
Professional associations	18%	71%	10%	18%	3%	5%
Social service departments	17%	52%	18%	29%	16%	14%
Environmental agencies	17%	64%	9%	30%	4%	15%
Bookstores	17%	69%	6%	24%	8%	10%
YMCA / YWCA	16%	50%	18%	37%	19%	18%
Entrepreneurial centers	16%	65%	13%	30%	4%	11%
Airports / aviation	16%	45%	7%	40%	3%	39%
Housing agencies / organizations	15%	58%	16%	22%	9%	14%
Transportation agencies / orgs.	14%	49%	25%	46%	3%	25%
Agricultural Extension Service(s)	13%	59%	5%	33%	11%	18%
Small Business Dev. Centers	13%	65%	21%	31%	2%	8%
State and national parks	12%	53%	18%	38%	5%	23%
Law enforce. -- juvenile justice	10%	47%	23%	47%	12%	27%
Law enforce.-- corrections/prisons	7%	56%	15%	38%	6%	8%
Immigration agencies	5%	48%	23%	26%	10%	16%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 11. Advocacy and Strategic Messaging

Nearly all of the responding LAAs indicate some level of involvement in advocacy, typically for arts funding, but also on issues like keeping arts education in the schools and cultural tourism. We asked LAAs to select the three most effective case-making arguments for arts funding for four key funding groups: elected officials, business leaders, private sector funders, and individual donors.

Overall, the top three case-making arguments for the arts were (1) arts education, (2) economic impact of the arts, and (3) improving quality of life. As the effective arts advocate knows, however, different messages often resonate the loudest to different constituencies. Notice how the top three messages differ for the four funder categories:

- Elected officials: (1) the economic impact, (2) arts and community development, and (3) arts education.
- Business leaders: (1) economic impact, (2) benefits to business, and (3) arts and community development.
- Private funders: (1) arts education, (2) improving quality of life, and (3) community livability.
- Individual donors: (1) arts education, (2) quality of life, and (3) “arts for arts’ sake.”

The table below lists the advocacy cases by overall effectiveness (1- most effective to 26-least effective), as well as the unique findings for each funding group (the top and bottom three in each column are bolded). Clearly, LAAs are maintaining a quiver full of case-making arrows, and deploying them strategically.

#### Advocacy Arguments Ranked by Effectiveness with Each Leadership Group

ADVOCACY ARGUMENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS	BUSINESS LEADERS	PRIVATE FUNDERS	INDIVIDUAL DONORS	OVERALL
Arts in education	3	9	1	1	1
Economic impact of the arts	1	1	7	11	2
Arts and improving the quality of life	6	5	2	2	3
Arts and community development	2	3	3	5	4
Arts and community livability	4	4	4	4	5

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

ADVOCACY ARGUMENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS	BUSINESS LEADERS	PRIVATE FUNDERS	INDIVIDUAL DONORS	OVERALL
The arts for arts' sake	17	15	6	3	6
Arts and at-risk youth	10	13	5	6	7
Cultural tourism	5	6	13	15	8
Public access to the arts	13	16	8	7	9
Arts and business	11	2	15	17	10
Creative placemaking	9	12	9	10	11
Arts and civic engagement	12	14	10	8	12
Arts and jobs/employment	7	7	20	16	13
Creativity and innovation	15	11	11	12	14
Arts and the 21st century workforce	14	8	14	20	15
Cultural preservation	19	22	12	9	16
Creative workforce	16	10	21	21	17
Arts and health in the military	8	23	22	25	18
Arts and aging	20	21	17	13	19
STEM to STEAM	18	17	18	18	20
Arts and citizenship	21	18	19	14	21
Arts and the environment	22	19	16	19	22
Arts, transportation, and infrastructure	23	20	24	26	23
Arts and healthcare (general)	24	24	25	22	24
Arts, immigration, and naturalization	25	26	23	23	25
Arts, prisons, and rehabilitation	26	25	26	24	26

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 12. Services to Arts Organizations

Ninety percent of LAAs report that they provide direct services to arts organizations as a means to facilitate the operation and responsible growth of their local arts industry and to promote greater community participation in the arts. These services include seminars and workshops, technical assistance, central accounting, group health insurance, and advocacy.

#### LAA Services to Arts Organizations

SERVICE AREA POPULATION	LESS THAN 100,000	100,000 TO 999,999	1,000,000 OR MORE	ALL LAAs
Publicity and/or promotional services	37%	59%	55%	49%
Facility space (e.g., meeting, performance)	37%	56%	45%	46%
Grants / financial support	32%	52%	60%	44%
Seminars and/or workshops	25%	57%	60%	44%
Convening / networking opportunities	26%	50%	66%	42%
Advocacy trainings, services, and support	18%	44%	53%	34%
Central/shared event calendaring	25%	38%	27%	31%
Technical assistance	18%	37%	54%	31%
Referrals	20%	38%	39%	30%
Marketing services	16%	37%	35%	28%
Registry / directory	16%	29%	30%	24%
Arts management training	8%	28%	52%	22%
Equipment loans	17%	18%	10%	16%
Shared mailing list	14%	20%	13%	16%
Volunteer recruitment	15%	15%	23%	16%
Block booking (of shows and events, etc.)	14%	16%	10%	14%
Central box office	9%	8%	4%	7%
Central accounting	4%	5%	4%	4%
Health insurance	0%	3%	6%	2%
Central purchasing	1%	3%	2%	2%
Money loans	0%	0%	8%	1%
Other / Miscellaneous / Not listed above	9%	13%	22%	12%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 13. Services to Individual Artists

Eighty-eight percent of LAAs indicated offering at least one service to individual artists in their community. Most frequently the services they provide are exhibit or performance opportunities (59 percent), marketing and promotion (44 percent), and workshops or seminars (43 percent).

#### LAA Services to Individual Artists

SERVICE AREA POPULATION	LESS THAN 100,000	100,000 TO 999,999	1,000,000 OR MORE	ALL LAAs
Exhibit and/or performance opportunities	59%	63%	48%	59%
Exhibit and/or gallery space	54%	65%	46%	58%
Information	47%	62%	59%	55%
Marketing / promotion	35%	53%	41%	44%
Artistic workshops / classes / seminars	39%	46%	47%	43%
Grants / financial support	28%	38%	43%	34%
Artist registry	22%	39%	35%	31%
Business workshops / classes / seminars	19%	39%	46%	31%
Referrals	23%	38%	31%	31%
Residency / teaching opportunities	28%	32%	37%	31%
Performance space	29%	32%	23%	29%
Rehearsal space	25%	24%	17%	23%
Employment referrals / job bank	12%	18%	24%	16%
Studio space	15%	19%	5%	16%
Mentorship facilitation	9%	16%	17%	13%
Administrative support	13%	13%	13%	13%
Life skills training	4%	12%	23%	10%
Technology / web development	2%	5%	4%	3%
Legal assistance	0%	2%	10%	2%
Insurance	1%	1%	0%	1%
Money loans	0%	1%	2%	1%
Subsidized living space	0%	0%	2%	1%
Other	5%	2%	4%	4%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 14. Services to the General Public

As a means of ensuring everyone in their community has the opportunity to engage with the arts, many LAAs have services targeted to the general public, such as online arts programming schedules, social media, and coordinating volunteer opportunities. Services also vary by service area population. For example, 22 percent of agencies with service area populations of 1,000,000 or more offer apps for mobile devices, while only 6 percent of those who serve less than 100,000 do so.

#### LAA Services to the General Public

SERVICE AREA POPULATION	LESS THAN 100,000	100,000 TO 999,999	1,000,000 OR MORE	ALL LAAs
Calendar of cultural events (Online)	63%	76%	64%	69%
Social media updates, offers, and/or alerts	56%	70%	75%	65%
Calendar of cultural performance and/or events (E-mail)	54%	70%	55%	61%
Artistic workshops, classes, and seminars	61%	56%	39%	56%
Art-making opportunities	57%	53%	36%	53%
Newsletters / publications	42%	57%	63%	51%
Public performances	58%	47%	39%	51%
Website resources	39%	53%	66%	48%
Festivals	47%	51%	33%	47%
Lectures / educational opportunities	41%	51%	47%	46%
Calendar of cultural performance and/or events (Print)	44%	43%	33%	42%
Directory of arts organizations	22%	44%	40%	34%
Advocacy updates	23%	41%	43%	33%
Directory of artists	25%	37%	31%	31%
Scholarships	31%	28%	17%	28%
Public art tours	23%	29%	34%	27%
Community cultural guides (e.g., educational, historical)	19%	29%	33%	25%
Discounted ticket opportunities	25%	22%	31%	24%
Ticketing service (In-Person)	22%	24%	18%	23%
Ticketing service (Online)	19%	22%	23%	21%
Bus tours / field trips	15%	23%	23%	20%
Studio tours	11%	18%	7%	14%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

SERVICE AREA POPULATION	LESS THAN 100,000	100,000 TO 999,999	1,000,000 OR MORE	ALL LAAs
Apps for mobile devices	6%	15%	22%	12%
TV shows or media profiles covering the arts	9%	14%	13%	12%
Other	5%	5%	5%	5%

### 15. Audience Engagement

LAAAs are making meaningful investments in developing and/or engaging arts audiences. Three in four (75 percent) indicated doing so in the past two years. Most frequently these efforts involve new programs that target specific audiences, developing participatory or educational programming, and offering arts and culture experiences in non-traditional settings.

#### Audience Engagement Strategies Used by LAAs

75 PERCENT MADE RECENT AND MEANINGFUL INVESTMENTS IN AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT	
<i>Of those...</i>	
Developed new programs that are relevant to specific target audiences	62%
Developed new participatory and/or educational programming	52%
Offered cultural experiences in an unconventional space or facility	45%
Implemented a new marketing strategy designed to increase attendance	44%
Collected data on audience preferences and/or behaviors	39%
Implemented a new marketing strategy designed to engage audiences	38%
Engaged audiences in the consumption of the arts through technology	31%
Involved audience members in the program planning process	29%
Implemented a new pricing model for its cultural programs and events	18%
Other	6%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 16. Arts Education Programs

Eighty-nine percent of LAAs are involved in arts education programs and in-school and/or out-of-school activities. Common strategies that LAAs use to support arts education include residencies or performances, directories of artists and arts organizations, and advocating on behalf of arts education.

- 73 percent include addressing arts education in their community as part of the agency's written mission statement and/or goals.
- 47 percent receive revenue that is dedicated specifically to support arts education efforts.
- On average, 19 percent of the LAA operating budget is designated toward arts education.
- 70 percent provide staffing for their arts education related activities. They do so most frequently by working with arts education practitioners such as educators and teaching artists (55 percent) and with volunteers (45 percent).

### LAA Arts Education Services and Programs

89 PERCENT PROVIDE ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	
Of those...	
Advocate on behalf of arts education	70%
Cultivate relationships with key decision makers	66%
Provide direct services (e.g., residencies, performances, field trips)	54%
Offer funding for direct services and/or partnerships with schools	45%
Unify community resources and/or create cross-sector partnerships	42%
Curate or host directories of arts organizations / artists	37%
Offer professional development for classroom teachers and/or school leaders	23%
Provide technical assistance and tool kits for school districts and arts organizations	19%
Provide training programs for artists to work in schools	12%
Other	10%



## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 17. Public Art

Forty-five percent of LAAs operate a public art program, and an additional 23 percent indicated that they are considering implementing one. The programs range from spearheading individual projects to managing multi-million dollar percent-for-art initiatives.

Of the LAAs that operate a public art program:

- 25 percent have at least one full-time employee dedicated to public art.
- 31 percent receive funding from a percent-for-art ordinance.
- 49 percent participate in regional or national networks that share public art resources and expertise.

### Public Art Supported by LAAs

45 PERCENT OPERATE A PUBLIC ART PROGRAM	
<i>Of those, they work with...</i>	
Three-dimensional work (e.g., sculpture, bas-relief, statues)	74%
Two-dimensional work (e.g., murals, mosaics, terrazzo, photography)	72%
Temporary installations	66%
Site-specific integrated artwork (e.g., architecture, landscape architecture)	60%
Art-based street fairs and/or festivals	47%
Performance, time-based artwork (e.g., music, theater, dance, spoken word)	37%
Multi-media / new technology (e.g., light art, projections, video, audio)	29%
Other	5%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 18. Community and Cultural Planning

Twenty-eight percent of LAAs report that they have participated in cultural planning—a community-inclusive process of assessing the cultural needs of the community and mapping an implementation plan. Interestingly, in communities with a cultural plan, LAA budgets and their support from local government both increased at a greater rate than in communities with no cultural plan. This is a finding observed in LAA surveys since the 1990s.

LAAs also ensure that the arts are part of broader civic planning efforts. Thirty-eight percent indicate that arts and culture has been integrated into an adopted community-wide comprehensive planning effort. Of those, the arts have been incorporated into, for example, economic development plans (62 percent) and tourism planning efforts (47 percent). Within the ‘other’ category, several organizations mentioned wayfinding and park system plans.

#### Planning Documents that Incorporate Arts and Culture

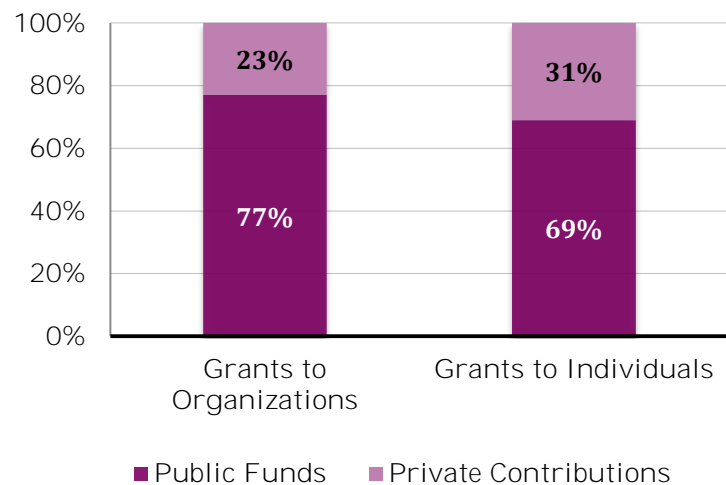
38 PERCENT OF LAA COMMUNITIES HAVE INCORPORATED ARTS AND CULTURE TO THEIR PLANNING DOCUMENTS	
Of those...	
Economic development plan	62%
Tourism plan	47%
Historic / preservation plan	39%
Neighborhood plan	29%
Business development/improvement plan	28%
Re-development plan	26%
Land use plan	20%
Marketing plan	19%
Urban plan	19%
Architectural plan	15%
Regional plan	12%
Transportation plan	12%
Environmental plan	8%
Housing plan	6%
Refuse/recycling plan	3%
Other	17%

### 19. Grantmaking

Fifty-three percent of LAAs provide financial support to arts organizations and/or individual artists in the form of grants and contracts. LAAs provide funds to both emerging and established organizations for general operating support and special projects. Funding to individual artists may include fellowships, public art commissions, and support to artists who work in community settings.

- 49 percent provide financial support to nonprofit arts organizations in their community.
- 35 percent provide financial support to individual artists.
- 30 percent support both arts organizations and artists.
- Of agencies that give to organizations, 92 percent do so for cultural and artistic programming, while 49 percent provide grants for operating support.
- 46 percent have a limit on the percentage of an organization's budget (or a project's budget) that it will fund.
- LAAs that provide direct financial support to individual artists do so for special projects (42 percent), professional development (32 percent), and fellowships (12 percent). Sixty-two percent have no restrictions in terms of the artistic disciplines they will fund.
- Most grantmaking dollars come from public funding. However, grants to individuals are more likely to be funded by private contributions than grants to organizations.

Granting Dollars Sources



## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### Diversity and Grantmaking

- 42 percent of grantmaking LAAs have funding programs that require the grantee to demonstrate diversity in a specific area such as the audience, board, or the artists involved in the project.
- 78 percent consider diversity when selecting panelists for the grant review process, and 71 percent ask that panels consider diversity when making funding decisions.

## 20. Facility Management

Fifty-nine percent of LAAs report that they manage at least one cultural facility. Of those, 53 percent own a facility, 43 percent rent one, and 21 percent manage someone else's facility. These facilities can include performance and exhibition space, museums, and arts incubators. Private, nonprofit LAAs are more likely to manage a cultural facility than public LAAs (63 percent vs. 48 percent).

### Types of Facilities that LAAs Own, Rent, or Manage for Other Organizations

*\*Percentages calculated based on the number of LAAs who manage these types of facilities.*

59% OF LAAS MANAGE CULTURAL FACILITIES	YES	OWN*	RENT*	MANAGE SOMEONE ELSE'S*
<i>Of those...</i>				
Gallery / exhibition space	86%	60%	33%	15%
Office space (our own)	76%	61%	35%	8%
Meeting / classroom space	72%	65%	36%	6%
Performance space	60%	65%	31%	13%
Rehearsal space	42%	68%	34%	10%
Kitchen / catering space	33%	72%	30%	7%
Studios / studio space	32%	67%	33%	8%
Public space (e.g., plaza)	31%	67%	23%	18%
Performing arts center	30%	71%	26%	10%
Retail space	29%	61%	40%	4%
Office space (for others)	25%	65%	36%	11%
Artist live / work space	18%	56%	36%	17%
Film screening room	17%	72%	31%	8%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

59% OF LAAS MANAGE CULTURAL FACILITIES	YES	OWN*	RENT*	MANAGE SOMEONE ELSE'S*
Arts incubator space	14%	58%	36%	14%
Restaurant and/or bar	8%	83%	28%	0%
Visiting artist housing	7%	56%	20%	28%
Others / Miscellaneous	6%	65%	43%	4%

### 21. Sources of Revenue

Nationally, the largest source of LAA funding is local government, followed by private sector contributions and earned income. A closer examination of LAA revenues, however, reveals significant differences depending whether the LAA is public or private. As in past studies, the majority of public LAA revenues come from municipal government sources (79 percent), while private LAAs see their largest share coming from private contributions (35 percent) and earned sources (29 percent). These revenue percentages are similar to past studies from the 2000s and even the 1990s.

#### Local Arts Agency Sources of Revenue

SOURCE OF REVENUE	NONPROFIT	GOVERNMENT	ALL LAAs
Earned Income	29%	10%	23%
Private Sector Contributions	35%	7%	26%
Government Support (All levels)	26%	79%	43%
In-Kind/Miscellaneous	10%	5%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

# 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

## 22. Funding Innovations

LAAAs are instrumental in the establishment of local option taxes—designated tax revenue streams that are used to fund arts and culture locally. Local option taxes provide significant and long-term funding for the arts community. Examples include St. Louis’ property tax (\$70 million per year), San Francisco’s hotel tax (\$30 million per year), Denver’s sales tax (\$45 million per year), and Cuyahoga County’s cigarette tax (\$15 million per year). These dollars are allocated in many ways and do not always flow through LAA budgets.

Sixteen percent of LAA indicated they receive funds from a local option tax, with public agencies receiving them more frequently than private agencies (20 percent vs. 14 percent). The most common of these is by far the lodging tax (66 percent), followed by less frequent sales (11 percent) and food taxes (10 percent).

### Local Option Taxes that Fund LAAs

16% OF LAAS RECEIVE FUNDS FROM LOCAL OPTION TAXES	
<i>Of those...</i>	
Hotel / motel / lodging tax	66%
Sales tax	11%
Food / meal tax	10%
Property tax	7%
Alcohol / liquor / beverage tax	4%
Admissions / amusement tax	3%
Other	15%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 23. Expenditures

Total expenditures for the 1,127 surveyed LAAs were approximately \$1.3 billion in 2015. After payroll, the largest single expense for LAAs is grantmaking (22 percent of expenditures on average), with public LAAs spending a larger proportion of their budget on grants than private LAAs (36 percent vs. 16 percent).

It is also interesting to note that private agencies spend on average 4 percent of their money on fundraising related expenses (excluding payroll), and receive on average 35 percent of their income from private sector contributions sources.

#### Public and Private LAA Expenditures

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	ALL
Payroll expenses	29%	30%	30%
Grants/contracts	36%	16%	22%
Fundraising (all fundraising-related expenses)	0%	4%	3%
Advertising, marketing, and promotion	3%	6%	5%
Public art (planning, development, installation, and maintenance)	8%	2%	4%
Cultural facility management	3%	3%	3%
Administrative overhead (e.g., rent, utilities, supplies) <sup>3</sup>	5%	11%	9%
Delivery of programs and/or services	5%	11%	9%
Cultural programming	9%	11%	10%
Others/miscellaneous/not listed above	2%	6%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

---

<sup>3</sup> The percentage of “administrative overhead” expenditures can be difficult to track as some LAAs include expenses for programs and services as part of administration.

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 24. Services to the Business Community

Business Committees for the Arts (BCAs), United Arts Funds (UAFs), and Arts and Business Councils (ABCs) are examples of LAAs that focus on engaging the support and participation of local businesses and their employees in the arts. Programs include workplace giving, employee volunteer training and coordination, recognition events for businesses that support the arts, and even coordinating “Corporate Battles of the Bands” competitions. There are many “non-BCA” arts councils that also deliver these programs.

#### Services to Businesses

63 PERCENT OF LAAS PROVIDE SERVICES TO BUSINESSES	
<i>Of those...</i>	
Arts experiences for employees	58%
Rotating art exhibits	41%
Board placements	34%
Volunteer placements	34%
Art purchase programs	16%
Arts-based workplace training programs for businesses and their employees	9%
Nonprofit board training programs	9%
Volunteer training programs	8%
Other	14%



## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### 25. Awards and Community Recognition

Fifty-one percent of LAAs give awards or other annual recognitions to community leaders and organizations to recognize their support and contribution to the arts and culture. Most commonly these awards are given to individual artists, patrons/donors, businesses, and to other arts organizations. Private LAAs are more likely than public LAAs to give out awards (58 percent vs. 39 percent).

#### LAAs Awardees

51 PERCENT RECOGNIZE COMMUNITY LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	ALL
<i>Of those...</i>			
Individual artists	71%	58%	61%
Individual patrons/donors	33%	49%	45%
Businesses	28%	45%	41%
Arts organizations	56%	35%	40%
Students	32%	39%	37%
Business leaders	22%	32%	29%
Citizen advocates	30%	27%	28%
Educators (e.g., teachers, professors)	24%	26%	26%
Foundations and/or members of the private funding community	18%	16%	16%
Education administrators (e.g., principals, superintendents)	13%	13%	13%
Elected officials	10%	12%	11%
Other government officials and/or staff	5%	8%	8%
Other	19%	15%	16%

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### Local Arts Agencies Looking to the Future

Based on the responses to forecasting and opinion questions, LAA leaders are in a period of stability and anticipating no major financial headwinds in the next three years. LAA Executive directors, however, do estimate an increase in demand for their programs and services

- Sixty-one percent of LAAs anticipated increased demand for their services from their constituents in 2016. Thirty-six percent didn't anticipate a change, and only 2 percent thought there would be a decrease in demand.
- Most LAAs described their financial outlook for 2016 as "about the same as it is in 2015" (64 percent). Of those who anticipated a change, 17 percent thought 2016 would be easier, and 19 percent thought 2016 would be more difficult than 2015.
- About two in five LAAs (44 percent) anticipated local government funding for the arts to change in the next three years, and they were more likely to anticipate an increase (28 percent) than a decrease (16 percent).
- A third of LAAs (33 percent) said they have experienced new or increased competition from other organizations located within their geographic service area that provide similar programs and/or services. Most frequently, other arts organizations are offering these programs (24 percent), but also non-arts organizations (14 percent) and funders (2 percent) are starting programs as well. Five percent of LAAs chose 'other' sources of competition, most commonly for-profit, art-related ventures such as galleries and art studios or classes.

As they have for more than half a century, local arts agencies remain at the forefront of ensuring the arts have a vital presence in communities—strengthening their arts industries, ensuring equity and access for the public, and connecting the arts to the pressing issues of our times. While the “how” is different for all of them, the “why” always remains: All the arts for all the people.

This report was written by Randy Cohen, Graciela Kahn, and Ben Davidson. The Local Arts Agency Census was funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. To learn more about the Local Arts Agency Census and download topic reports please visit: [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LAACensus](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LAACensus)

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

### About Americans for the Arts

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. For more than 50 years, it has been dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. From offices in Washington, D.C., and New York City, it serves more than 150,000 organizational and individual members and stakeholders.

Americans for the Arts is focused on four primary goals:

1. Lead and serve individuals and organizations to help build environments in which the arts and arts education thrive and contribute to more vibrant and creative communities.
2. Generate meaningful public and private sector policies and more leaders and resources for the arts and arts education.
3. Build individual awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts and arts education.
4. Ensure the operational stability of the organization and its ability to creatively respond to opportunities and challenges.

To achieve its goals, Americans for the Arts partners with local, state, and national arts organizations; government agencies; business leaders; individual philanthropists; educators; and funders throughout the country. It provides extensive arts-industry research and professional development opportunities for community arts leaders via specialized programs and services, including a content-rich website and an annual national convention.

Local arts agencies throughout the United States comprise Americans for the Arts' core constituency. A variety of unique partner networks with particular interests such as public art, united arts fundraising, arts education, and emerging arts leaders are also supported.

Through national visibility campaigns and local outreach, Americans for the Arts strives to motivate and mobilize opinion leaders and decision-makers who can make the arts thrive in America. Americans for the Arts produces annual events that heighten national visibility for the arts, including the National Arts Awards and BCA TEN honoring private-sector leadership and the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards (in cooperation with The United States Conference of Mayors) honoring elected officials in local, state,

## 2015 LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS

and federal government.

Americans for the Arts also hosts Arts Advocacy Day annually on Capitol Hill, convening arts advocates from across the country to advance federal support of the arts, humanities, and arts education.

For more information about Americans for the Arts, please visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org)

### LAA Task Force Members

- Teri Aldrich, Executive Director, Minot Area Council of the Arts
- Torrie Allen, Chief Officer, Marketing and Development, Alaska Public Media
- Jennifer Armstrong, Director, Community Arts Development Programs, Illinois Arts Council
- Dr. Amanda Ashley, Assistant Professor, Community and Regional Planning, Boise State University
- Nick Crosson, Senior Research Associate, DataArts
- Maryo Gard Ewell, Colorado Creative Industries
- Roland Kushner, Asst. Professor, Department of Accounting, Economics & Business, Muhlenberg College
- Bill Nix, Nix Communications Group (Retired VP, Palm Beach County Cultural Council)
- Felix Padron, Executive Director, City of San Antonio's Department for Cultural Affairs
- Reuben Roqueni, Program Officer, Hewlett Foundation (formerly at Tucson-Pima Arts Council)San San Wong, Senior Program Officer, Arts & Creativity, Barr Foundation in Boston (formerly at San Francisco Arts Commission)