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Not-for-Profit Theatre in America

The Field at a Glance

In 1961, the American theatre field consisted of only 16 theatre companies established specifically for educational and charitable purposes. Today, thanks in large measure to the pivotal role played by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since 1965, the not-for-profit theatre field consists of more than 1,700 theatres located in major metropolitan centers, urban neighborhoods, suburbs, and rural communities. Their wide-ranging repertoire includes classics; modern plays and musicals; new plays, adaptations, and translations by American and international writers; plays for culturally-specific and young audiences; and experimental, multimedia, and performance-art works.

Theatre Facts 2014, a study by Theatre Communications Group based on its annual Fiscal Survey, reported on an estimated Universe of 1,770 professional not-for-profit theatres, including 177 Profiled TCG Member Theatres. Combined, these theatres directly contributed more than \$2 billion to the U.S. economy; the real economic impact is even greater when spending by theatres' attendees and employees in their local communities is taken into account. The Universe of theatres employed 135,000 theatre workers, including actors, directors, playwrights, designers, administrators, and technicians. For the 177 Profiled Theatres—ranging in size from \$92,000 to \$62 million in annual expenses—compensation of personnel represented over 54% of total expenses, a reflection of the labor-intensive nature of the art form and the many cultural workers whose livelihoods theatres are preserving. The Universe of not-for-profit theatres offered 216,000 performances that attracted nearly 33 million patrons. The 177 Profiled Theatres also served 2.7 million people through 1,190 education and outreach programs, including touring productions, artists-in-the-schools, teacher training, classes, workshops and lectures in local community centers and libraries, internships for college students, special programs for at-risk children, and life-long learning opportunities.

The direct impact of a theatre's receiving funding from the NEA comes not only in the form of project grants, but also in the multiplier effect that these grants, through their 2-to-1 or 3-to-1 matching funds requirement, have on theatres' abilities to leverage and attract other private and public funding.

Estimated 2014 Universe of U.S. Professional Not-For-Profit Theatres

1,770 Theatres

Estimated Productivity

Attendance	32,800,000
Subscribers	1,460,000
Performances	216,000
Productions	22,000

Estimated Finances

Earnings	\$1,190,000,000
Contributions	\$1,050,000,000
Total Income	\$2,240,000,000
Expenses	\$2,150,000,000
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets (CUNA)	\$90,000,000

Estimated Work Force

Artistic	90,000
Administrative	15,000
Technical	30,000
Total Paid Personnel	135,000

Indirectly, NEA funding can be leveraged for its symbolic imprimatur and also affects theatres as it trickles down in the form of block grants to states. Forty percent of NEA funding goes to state arts agencies, which is then distributed to organizations like not-for-profit theatres. Of the 177 Profiled TCG Member Theatres, 43% reported funds from both the NEA and their State Arts Agency, while 45% reported funding from only one of the two sources. In total 88% of Profiled Theatres benefited from federal funding.

By supporting many of the nation's finest theatre institutions, the NEA has contributed far beyond the actual monetary value of its grants. Nearly every Pulitzer Prize-winning play since 1976 originated at an NEA-funded theatre, and a network of educational and outreach programs has sprung up across the country as a result of NEA support, ensuring access to all Americans and developing new generations of audiences.

Examples of Community Impact

The NEA awarded a \$35,000 Art Works grant to support the development and production of Seattle-based **ACT Theatre's** *Tale of the Heike*, a devised work based on a 13th-century Japanese epic poem about the struggle between the Taira and Minamoto clans for control of Ancient Japan. Commissioned playwrights Philip Kan Gotanda and Yussef El Guindi have begun revising and shaping their script based in part on a recent week-long workshop at the University of Washington School of Drama with director Kurt Beattie and dramaturg Mott Greene. Far more than a theatrical production, *Heike* will be part of a yearlong, citywide program of cultural events and fairs to celebrate Japanese culture and literary heritage in 2017, produced in partnership with the Japan Arts Connection Lab, the Japanese Garden, the Seattle International Film Festival, the Seattle Public Library, and the Seattle Art Museum. ACT Theatre anticipates approximately 35 performances of *Tale of the Heike*, which, considering both the performances and related interdisciplinary immersion programming events, will serve approximately 145,000 people.

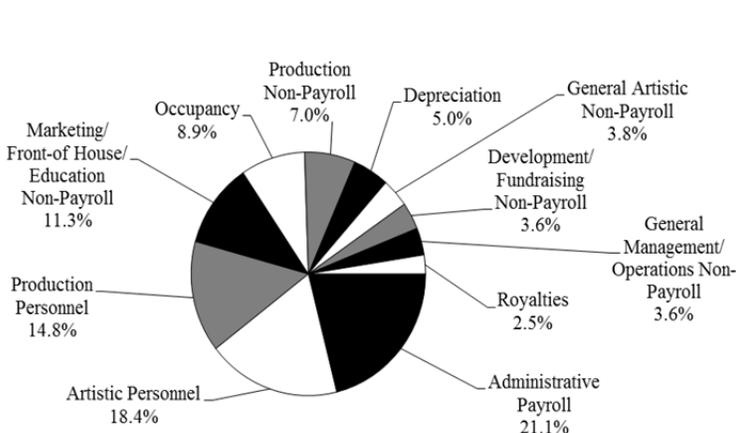
Cleveland Play House (CPH) will devote its recently awarded \$20,000 NEA grant funds to aid the development and premiere of *The Good Peaches*, written by Pulitzer Prize winner Quiara Alería Hudes, directed by CPH Artistic Director Laura Kepley, and conducted by Cleveland Orchestra Associate Conductor Brett Mitchell. The work explores topical political and social issues through an adventure journey parable that features orchestral elements in its depiction of a woman who survives a confrontation with the forces of nature. A multiplicity of voices and spiritualities are represented, drawing on Hudes' diverse inspirations of classical, jazz, and world music; world religions; and her expression of the universal themes of change and justice. *The Good Peaches* marks CPH's third collaboration with The Cleveland Orchestra and will be part of the theatre's 2016 New Ground Theatre Festival, an annual showcase of new works. Approximately 1,500 patrons will enjoy three performances April 14-16, with additional activities to potentially include behind-the-scenes events, pre-show conversations, talkbacks with artists, and master classes.

Thanks in part to a \$20,000 Art Works grant, St. Paul, Minneapolis's **Penumbra Theatre Company** will present a production of *Sunset Baby*, by Dominique Morisseau. The play, to be directed by Penumbra Founder and Co-Artistic Director Lou Bellamy, explores the legacy of the revolutionary Black Power movement through the eyes of various generations, probes the ways in which the spirit of cultural revolutions can undergo drastic change over time, and investigates the media's role in representing figures of controversy who deeply affect their societies. The company will augment the production, which will run for 26 performances from April 16 through May 8, with contextual materials and audience engagement activities that explore issues of race and social justice. As many as 4,500 individuals along with 900 participants will be reached through education and outreach efforts. Study guides; classroom discussions; post-performance conversations; and discussions with former Panther Party members, including Erika Huggins and Co-Founder Bobby Seale, will be among these offerings and will provide forums for vibrant conversation.

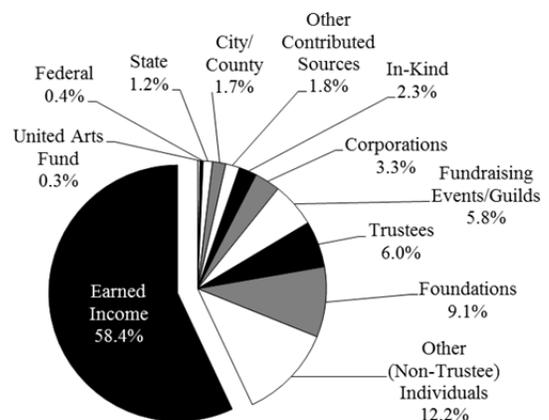
Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University in West Virginia was awarded \$20,000 via an NEA Art Works grant to support the development and premiere of *The Wedding Gift*, by Chisa Hutchinson. This fantastical play takes place in an imaginary universe in which the population treats humans as animals to be domesticated and for which Hutchinson has created her own language and culture. The piece will be a theatrical spectacular: an assault on recurrent racism in the United States that uses both humor and pathos to explore what it means to be an outsider. Along with the four-week rehearsal process with the playwright in residence and four-week performance run in the Festival's 416-seat Frank Center theatre, expanded audience enrichment opportunities with lectures and discussions led by scholars, artist/audience conversations, and essays and artwork curated to coincide with the play's concept will carry the themes of the work beyond the stage and into the community, reaching at least 4,000 patrons through the production's 15 performances and related events.

FROM THEATRE FACTS 2014: FOR THE 177 PROFILED TCG MEMBER THEATRES

BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES



INCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSES WITH CONTRIBUTED INCOME DETAIL*



*Percentages total more than 100% because total unrestricted income exceeded total expenses.