An Artistic Recovery: Using Arts and Culture to Spur Economic Development
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Introduction

In the midst of what has been called the Great Recession, officials across all levels of American government are struggling to make the adjustments necessary to deal with the crisis. Demand by the public for saleable goods and services has contracted and productivity throughout multiple industries has declined. While these two detriments have contributed to a sometimes gloomy economic and political atmosphere, one thing is for sure: economic recovery has become the number one priority nationwide.

As a result, localities—especially counties—continue to search for policies aimed at jumpstarting the economy in their communities. Yet along with this need, there has been a tangible increase in demands on officials to balance budgets and trim county expenses. This intense pressure to curb spending, coupled with a desire to weather the economic storm, has forced many county officials to examine their programs, determine their usefulness and either keep, decrease or eliminate their funding. One type of expenditure frequently up for examination includes those that support artistic and cultural endeavors.

All too often, these arts and culture programs are the first to be eliminated in official’s efforts to cut spending. While often a favorite beneficiary of the government when the economy is booming, funding for the arts enters a drought as soon as counties feel pressed to get out of the red. In many parts of the country, financial support for the arts has followed this typical and unfortunate pattern.

This near dismissal of arts and culture by officials reveals an attitude held by many in elected office: that the arts are a luxury expense to be enjoyed when times are good and eliminated when other programs need the funds. From a different perspective, this view implies that programs that support cultural and artistic activities are expenditures, rather than an investment with returns to be realized. However, the data indicates that this notion is mindset is not true.

According to Americans for the Arts, nonprofit artistic and cultural organizations—theaters, dance companies, museums, performance arts centers, orchestras, etc.—produce $166.2 billion in U.S. economic activity each year. Moreover, this number has been growing steadily over the past decade, as it was only $134 billion start of the new millennium. This vast amount of economic activity from art organizations produces benefits not only the populations that surround them, but also the governments that support them. They directly create over 5.7 million jobs, while providing $29.6 billion in annual federal, state and local tax revenue.

Perhaps most encouraging to governments analyzing this data is the rate of return for their investments in the arts. While the arts industry generated nearly $30 billion in tax receipts, federal, state and local governments together allocated less than $4 billion to support their activities. Essentially, governments receive seven times the amount of funds they invest in arts and culture annually.

With these statistics, it is clear that arts need not—and should not—be abandoned by governments during this recession. Through their direct contributions to the local economy, artistic and cultural programs provide jobs for the surrounding community, lead to business expansion and provide governments with much needed revenue.

This report profiles 10 counties that have used arts and culture programs to enhance their local economic development. Many of these programs are long term efforts that have developed into valuable assets for their communities during these tough times. In addition, past success has inspired many of these counties to expand their artistic and cultural investments in the face of current economic conditions. Designed to encourage new efforts, this guide will identify the
specific goals, background, careful planning and funding that led to these programs becoming successful for their respective counties. While not every program will work for every county, these overviews should give county officials the needed ideas and general themes to establish programs utilizing arts and culture that can produce economic results.

Sarasota County, Florida

Overview

Located on the coast along the Gulf of Mexico, Sarasota County benefits from the healthy state of the arts in Florida as a whole. It is estimated that every year 7 million out-of-state tourists travel to Florida specifically for the artistic and cultural attractions. During their visits, these tourists contribute a total of $9.3 billion to the state’s gross regional product. Through their visits and expenditures, these cultural tourists create 103,713 full-time jobs for Floridians. Clearly, the healthy artistic and cultural context of Florida creates the perfect environment for counties to create their own successful art policies. To be sure, Sarasota County recognizes this fact.

Sarasota County has earned a reputation as the center for the performing arts in the region over the years. The county’s employment in theater, dance and music is almost seven times more concentrated than the national average of employment in these industries—a rate that rivals Manhattan. Even in the current economic climate, the performing arts sector alone is expected to grow more than 12 percent over the next 2 years.

The success of Sarasota County’s performing arts industry is typical of the area’s artistic and cultural economy as a whole. As of 2008, the county is home to 1,690 arts related businesses that employ more than 6,000 people. Moreover, a separate study that analyzed Sarasota County-based nonprofit cultural organizations determined that they employ more than 3,000 full time cultural workers. As a result, these businesses contribute over $123 million in household income to local residents.

It is clear that Sarasota County, Florida has been successful in incorporating arts and culture into its long term vision for economic development. Certainly, these results are impressive, but some may wonder how officials were so efficient in utilizing the arts. One particular policy that was critical in Sarasota County’s artistic and cultural endeavors was the Tourist Development Cultural Arts Grant.

Tourist Development Cultural Arts Grant

The Sarasota County Arts Council, formed in 1986, was instrumental in lobbying its local government for a consistent source of funding for arts and culture within the county. In 1988, the group successfully campaigned for what is now known as the Tourist Development Tax. This was designed to redistribute a portion of an already existing hotel bed tax to arts and culture institutions. Once this initiative was passed, Sarasota County was able to use this potential source of steady financial support to attract businesses and individuals with vested interests in the arts.

Just as important as the tax itself is the method by which the funds are distributed. Fortunately, the Sarasota Arts Council has devised the Tourist Development Cultural Arts Grant as a means to ensure that only the most deserving and beneficial arts projects receive needed funding from the county. Applicants must meet certain guidelines if they are to be awarded a grant. Requirements include that the project must be county-based, have artistic merit and are able to match their grant award dollar-for-dollar. In this way, only established organizations with clear benefits receive the funding, which in turn makes each dollar as economically successful as possible. In fact, other counties including fellow Florida county Orange County have adopted a similar tax specifically for arts programs.
Through the Tourist Development Cultural Arts Grant, Sarasota County directs $1.2 million each year to artistic and cultural organizations within its jurisdiction. With this continuous support from the county government, arts and culture have served and should continue to serve as a consistent source of economic development for Sarasota County.

Orange County, Florida

Overview

Like Sarasota County, Orange County has the benefit of being located in a state with a vibrant arts and entertainment community. And also similar to their Florida neighbors, Orange County has identified a niche that has allowed it to use arts and culture as a tool for great economic benefits. Within the Central Florida region surrounding Orange County, nonprofit arts and culture represents a $165.3 million industry. It also supports 5,661 full-time jobs and produces $20.69 million in local and state revenue.

In Orange County alone, nonprofit arts and culture organizations on average spend nearly $60 million annually. These expenditures in turn control $81.89 million in additional spending by arts and culture audiences in the region. By hosting events such as the Orlando Ballet and the annual conferences of both the American Theatre Critics Association and the Florida Association of Public Art Administrators, Orange County continually recognizes the rewards from county investment in arts and culture.

Such an industry not only benefits its host government, but also provides jobs for the surrounding community. Orange County is but one example of this, as it has more people who list their profession as “Entertainers and Performers” than any metropolitan area in the country.

To be sure, artistic and cultural organizations have become an integral part of Orange County and its economy. While the amount of revenue and jobs coming from the sector is certainly impressive, it first required and continues to require investment from Orange County officials. A key part of this investment is the county’s impressive promotion of cultural tourism.

Promotion of Cultural Tourism

Despite the numbers presented, some may still question the wisdom of investing in cultural events as a means of economic development. Yet after examining the data on the spending habits of various types of tourists, officials in Orange County could no longer attempt to refute its benefits. Non-local arts and culture event attendees spend almost $40 a day compared to the $19 a day that other local event attendees spend—a difference of nearly 103 percent. This increased expenditure gets passed along to local hotels, restaurants and methods of transportation. Since Orange County officials recognized the benefits of cultural tourism and wished to tap into its resources, they have launched into an extensive promotional campaign of arts and cultural events.

In 2008, Orange County dispersed $1,453,850 in grants to promote, fund and invest in 18 cultural projects through its Cultural Tourism Project. These projects included events such as a Shakespeare festival, the Global Peace Festival and the Orlando Opera in addition to museums for events like the Norman Rockwell exhibit at the Orlando Museum of Art. Moreover, Orange County officials collaborated with other entities to ensure the promotion of local cultural events. One such group is the Red Chair Project, a regional public service campaign designed to support arts and culture throughout counties in Central Florida. At the end of the year, the attendees of these various cultural events had spent a total of $4,064,740. Essentially, for every dollar invested, Orange County received $3.14.

Not only did Orange County promote cultural tourism, but it also devoted time, effort and funds into the refurbishment of venues for these events. Through the Cultural Facilities Program, officials have assisted in the renovation of eight cultural buildings within the county. For example, these funds were vital to the completion of the West Garden Theater, now a prominent performing arts venue for West Orange County. In this way, Orange County has demonstrated its commitment to an artistic and cultural economy by both promoting its cultural events and ensuring that appropriate venues are available to host them in the near and distant future.
Fulton County, Georgia

Overview

Within the heart of Georgia, Fulton County is a consistent supporter of community arts and culture. Surely, the arts-friendly environment across the state contributes to this attitude. According to a study commissioned by the Metro Atlanta Arts and Culture Coalition, the arts create an economic impact of $386 million statewide, with a total of $722 million in annual spending. Clearly, artistic and cultural endeavors play an important role within Georgia.

Moreover, many of the state’s most popular art attractions are located within Fulton County, such as the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the annual National Black Arts Festival. As a result, economic indicators have responded in a predictable fashion. In 2002, a study by Americans for the Arts indicated that the arts in Fulton County represented 10,285 full-time jobs while at the same time creating $261 million in household income, $12.8 million in local taxes and $19 million in state taxes. It seems these encouraging results have cemented Fulton County’s dedication to community arts and culture programs, as demonstrated in July 2010, when the Fulton County Arts Council distributed more than $1.9 million to over 100 local arts programs.

Fulton County’s commitment to the arts extends beyond financial support as well. Recognizing that the key to ensuring that arts and culture continue to garner economic progress is the artistic education of future generations, county officials have developed comprehensive youth programs that promote the arts.

Commitment to County Youth

One effective art program administered by Fulton County is Art at Work. Designed and first implemented in 1995, Art at Work was first a month-long summer program that offers youth ages 14-16 arts education and job training. Since its inception, the program has evolved into both year-long and summer sections targeting youth with interests in the visual arts. Throughout their time in Art at Work, the students are exposed to various aspects of the arts industry including entrepreneurship, local exhibition and earning a living from their craft. The program dedicates the focus of its activities to studying and producing art, and the students themselves become “Apprentice Artists.” In addition, the program collaborates with the Fulton County Juvenile County and various social service agencies to provide a productive and educational space for select troubled youth. Annually, nearly 1,500 youth attend classes at the neighborhood Fulton County Arts Council centers. The Arts at Work program instills a love and appreciation for art in the next generation of Fulton County residents while at the same time offering them the tools needed to utilize their artistic talents in economically beneficial ways.

Fulton County’s commitment to local youth in the arts has also been demonstrated through the Neighborhood Project. The aim of this program is to reach the surrounding community by sending art instructors to nontraditional class areas—outdoor centers, parks, community centers, etc.—to reach young audiences not typically accessed by the arts industry. In the past classes have been held at super markets, a women’s resource center and a young adult guidance facility. According to the Fulton County Arts Council website, “the Neighborhood Program develops new audiences, increases access to the arts, promotes lifelong creative learning and gives families the opportunity to experience the arts together.” It is evident that through programs such as the Neighborhood Project and Art at Work, Fulton County is effectively exposing community youth to arts and culture in addition to its economic and business merits.

Salt Lake County, Utah

Overview

Tourism serves as a significant division of the Salt Lake County economy. Both the tourist and recreational sectors employ the largest proportion of workers in the urban areas of the county. Moreover, they expanded even in the midst of the current recession, creating over 1,000 new jobs in 2008. A significant portion of the county’s tourist traffic results from the local artistic and cultural attractions.

The Salt Lake County Center for the Arts features three state of the art performing arts facilities that regularly fill their seats to capacity.
These venues include the Capitol Theatre, a turn of the century auditorium home to the Utah Opera; Abravanel Hall, host to the Utah Symphony; and the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center, a venue with three theatres and a rotating art gallery. Moreover, the county features a variety of parks, recreational spaces and the largest zoo in the state. With these quality artistic and cultural facilities, Salt Lake County draws not only the best performances in the state, but also sizeable audiences whose expenditures are passed on to the surrounding communities.

Like any county, Salt Lake County aims to utilize their relatively healthy industries to power the community into recovery during this recession in which major employment sectors such as construction, business services and manufacturing have shed over 8,000 jobs in the past 12 months. Clearly, arts and culture have become one of Salt Lake County’s economic assets. One of the reasons for this has been the creation of the Zoo, Arts and Parks Tax.

Zoo, Arts and Parks Tax

The Zoo, Arts and Park (ZAP) Tax is essentially an additional sales tax first imposed by Salt Lake County officials over a decade ago. Through this tax, the county collects one additional penny for every 10 dollars spent within Salt Lake County. These funds are then deposited into a fund that directly benefits the county’s Zoo, Arts and Parks Program.

As a result of the ZAP Tax, Salt Lake County has consistently obtained the funds necessary to maintain the county’s continued investment in the local arts and culture community. Local organizations may apply for these funds each year as they become available. These applications are reviewed and approved by an advisory board. To be sure, this program gives numerous artistic and cultural endeavors in Salt Lake County access to a significant source of funding. For example, in 2006, 24 projects were approved by the Salt Lake County Council to receive either full or partial funding through the ZAP Program. In total, these projects collectively cost nearly $64 million. Without this financial support, the number of artistic and cultural enterprises in Salt Lake County would decline drastically. Indeed, when questioned about the ZAP Tax, Mayor of Salt Lake City pointed out that “this funding is critical to these organizations’ continued success.”

Some may question the popularity or wisdom of such a tax during today’s economic climate—even one as small as one tenth of a percent. However, the Salt Lake County ZAP Tax has proven to be popular by surviving multiple referenda. Indeed, when the county citizens were given the choice to either let the tax expire or renew it in 2003, the will of the county was clear. Leading up to the referendum, surveys consistently demonstrated between 60 and 78 percent support for the Zoo, Arts and Parks Tax.

Salt Lake County Councilman Jim Bradley was awarded the 2010 National Award for County Arts Leadership by Americans for the Arts, one of the nation’s leading nonprofit organizations for advancing the arts, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties. Bradley has strengthened his longtime county involvement in the arts to achieve new accomplishments including expanding the commitment to constructing and operating cultural venues, creating a public art program and establishing an art grants program with a budget of more than $15 million each year, according to Americans for the Arts. Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, had only the highest praise for Mr. Bradley. “His support in the county has not only increased funding for the arts and cultural sector, but his work has had a positive impact on the lives of local residents by providing artistic opportunities, creating jobs and stimulating the local economy.”
Predictably, the county voted overwhelmingly in favor of the tax on Election Day, renewing the tax for another decade. Even today, the ZAP Program continues to receive favorable marks from citizens, with a recent poll indicating that 58 percent of the county views the tax as very important.

Based on the popularity of the ZAP Tax, it is reasonable to assume that residents of Salt Lake County recognize both the economic and aesthetic benefits of supporting arts and culture. As a result, they are more tolerant to a tax that increases the well-being of the surrounding area.

Clayton County, Georgia

Overview

Over the years, Clayton County, Georgia has become a well known host to cultural and artistic events. Arts Clayton Inc.—the leading arts organization of the county—takes an active role in promoting annual events such as the Beaux Arts Barbecue in addition to numerous arts, dance and musical performances. As a result, artistic and cultural activities have gradually earned a reputation as a constant presence in Clayton County.

Due to these frequent performances, art now plays a critical role in the county’s economy. In 2007, the arts, entertainment and recreation industry accounted for $14.2 million in sales within Clayton County. While the transportation sector is the dominant employer in the county, arts has certainly become a beneficial supplement to the local economy. Today, the nation’s current recession has significantly impacted the transportation, manufacturing and retail industries within Clayton—all top employers in the county. Consequently, the creative economy of artistic and cultural activities is positioned to offer Clayton County residents needed jobs and economic benefits amidst the county’s current above average unemployment rate.

With its reputation as an excellent artistic host, Clayton County’s performing arts offer officials an excellent opportunity for investment during this economic recession. Not only does the county have a demand for concerts and cultural performances from both residents and artists themselves, it also has multiple state of the art venues available for use. It is these sites that make Clayton County such an attractive area for the performing arts. Had it not been county officials’ investment in these facilities, Clayton County’s potential for economic growth through arts and culture would be little to none. Two of the most impressive venues in Clayton County are Clayton County Performing Arts Center and Spivey Hall.

Clayton County Performing Arts Center and Spivey Hall

The Clayton County Performing Arts Center not only serves as the ideal venue for professional performances, it is also available for use by local performing arts students. Indeed, it was actually the need for a facility to host school concerts that spurred the Hall’s creation. Completed and opened in 1990, the Performing Arts Center funding was approved in a county-wide referendum by an overwhelming 90 percent of voters. Moreover, construction of the facility was both quick and efficient. Recent estimates by local contractors estimate the current value of the Performing Arts Center at between $18 million and $20 million. However, Clayton County was able to finance the completion of the facility for $7.5 million. For this bargain price, the County received a state-of-the-art facility with a 1,800 seat capacity auditorium, coupled to two additional stages. Since its opening, the Hall has hosted over 2 million audience members and performers. Each year, the venue facilitates between 400 and 500 events, each a unique artistic performance that typically attracts a capacity crowd. Professional entertainers from every continent except Antarctica have visited the Clayton County Performing Arts Center, drawing large crowds that generate economic revenue for the surrounding community. However, the facility has also allowed music, dance and performing arts programs for youth to continue and grow in popularity. In this way, the county sees both immediate benefits and invests in future arts and culture.

Paired with the Performing Arts Center in Clayton County is world-renowned Spivey Hall. Built in 1991, this 400 seat performing arts facility has become a favorite venue for musicians and performers due to its finely tuned and engineered acoustics. Over the years, Spivey Hall
has been profiled by both BBC Music Magazine and International Arts Manager, allowing it to earn an international reputation. Former conductor of the Atlanta and Cleveland Orchestras, Robert Shaw said of the venue, “Spivey Hall is to music what light is to painting.” But Spivey has not only benefited famous performers. In addition, Spivey Hall runs one of the largest educational outreach programs in the state of Georgia. The Noteworthy Concert Series exposes nearly 20,000 area children to the fine arts and music. Also, the Chorale and Chamber Orchestra Workshop promotes high-achieving instruction for 250 youth artists each year. Through both the Clayton County Performing Arts Center and Spivey Hall, Clayton County is able to instill a love of the arts in its local youth, while at the same time attract world-famous artists for crowd-pleasing and economically beneficial performances.

Los Angeles County, California

Overview

With an entertainment industry that dwarfs the majority of states, Los Angeles County has mastered the techniques of utilizing artistic and cultural endeavors for the purpose of economic development. While its size does give it some options that may not be possible for other counties, its programs nevertheless provide multiple examples of a county committed to arts and culture.

According to the Los Angeles Economic Development Council, nearly one in every six jobs in the county is directly or indirectly connected to the area’s local arts and culture. This sizeable proportion of jobs is created in large part by Los Angeles County’s enormous entertainment industry. In this subsection of the arts alone, the county has 117,000 employees who generate more than $38 billion in economic revenue annually. Indeed, in 2008, Los Angeles County had a 45 percent share of total U.S. entertainment employment.

Fueling this successful industry is the vast number of tourists visiting the area in search of arts and culture. Throughout this decade, Los Angeles County consistently drew over 25 million overnight visitors annually. Despite a slight drop to 24 million visitors in 2009 due to the recession, county officials expect the number of tourists to increase in upcoming years regardless of the current economic climate. While these expectations may be shocking to some, they are far from unrealistic because of the county’s continued investment in facilities and attractions. For examples, the refurbishment of the convention center and the construction of a convention center hotel should increase attendance at events hosted by the venue. In addition, separate departments—public and private—within the county are working in tandem to strengthen the relationship between economic development and the arts.

These efforts include a Cultural Master Plan to develop creative cultural activities and a Policy Platform in induce systemic expansion of the arts. As a result, Los Angeles County continues to expect tourists to flock to the area. Indeed, initial projections suggest that attendance will rebound to 25.1 million in 2010.

Recognizing the strength of this industry, county officials have dedicated the appropriate amount of resources to ensure that the sector continues to produce economic benefits. One of the most extensive and valuable investments is in art education for youth. A sample of the programs that typify the benefits of educating students about cultural and artistic possibilities is Los Angeles County’s Arts for All Program.

Arts for All

In September 2002, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors embraced Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education. As the title indicates, the project aims to fully revamp, improve and streamline arts education throughout the county. Managed by an executive committee and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Arts for All also partners with over 100 community members to ensure that education in dance, music, theatre and visual arts reaches all 1.7 million students in Los Angeles County.

For the past 7 years of its existence, Arts for All has made improving building infrastructure related to arts education the top priority of its activities. From this focus evolved several specific
goals or benchmarks for each of Los Angeles County’s 81 school districts. One of these goals is making sure that a district’s student to credentialed arts teacher ratio was no higher than 400:1. This would ensure that students received adequate time with their instructors. In addition, Arts for All encourages all of the county’s schools districts to hire an arts coordinator as a district level employee. The program also focuses on improving school board-adopted art policies and increasing the budgets of art programs to 5 percent or more of the total budget. Together, these are considered Art for All’s five critical success factors.

As of 2010, 34 of Los Angeles County’s school districts have committed to all five of Art for All’s benchmarks, with even more schools aiming to achieve the success factors within a few years. With more arts and cultural education integrated into the activities and practices of Los Angeles County school districts, the arts are now less likely to face budget cuts, even in these uncertain economic times. As a result of this initiative, artistic and cultural endeavors become even more integrated into the economy of Los Angeles County.

Fairfax County, Virginia

Overview

Adjacent to the nation’s capital in northern Virginia, Fairfax County has been described as a thriving location for both the visual and performing arts. Similar to previous counties profiled, Fairfax’s ability to produce such a vibrant arts scene is directly linked to the county’s extensive and high quality venues. One such venue is nearby George Mason University’s Center for the Arts, which hosts the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and numerous youth outreach programs. In addition, the Mount Vernon Community Children’s Theater is another performing arts venue that serves its community as a whole. The facility offers many performances featuring the arts and artwork of county youths. Specifically, the Children’s Theater collaborates with the Carl Sandburg Middle School to provide the school with a venue for its concert band. This relationship with the youth of Fairfax County has developed into an extensive cooperative effort, especially when the county hosts its annual International Children’s Festival.

Beyond its extensive performing arts venues, Fairfax County also contains numerous art galleries and community art centers. The Reston Community Center, the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center and the McLean Community Center are a few examples of such centers that offer numerous exhibits for community patrons. As a result, artistic and cultural endeavors have become a significant part of not only day-to-day life in Fairfax County, but also a significant part of the local economy.

While Fairfax County is largely a retail-based economy, arts and culture is able to provide a sizeable proportion of the area’s employment and economic revenue. According to the Census, arts and entertainment provide 7,343 full time jobs in the county. Moreover, these jobs and their employers generate over $600 million in annual revenue. This type of success within arts and culture is directly related to the county facilities and venues. It is this type of artistic economic development that allowed Fairfax County to develop a diversified economy, leading Time magazine to describe the county as “one of the great economic success stories of our time.”
A great part of this success has been Fairfax County’s intra and intergovernmental cooperation, allowing the county to expand possible artistic activities. The accomplishments of the Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center perfectly demonstrate the potential of such collaboration.

**Wolf Trap National Park and Performing Arts Center – Support and Cooperation**

Known as America’s National Park for the Performing Arts, Wolf Trap offers a one-of-a-kind venue for Fairfax County. With the Filene Center, a 7,000 seat outdoor auditorium, the park offers over 90 performances annually from late May through early September. In the past, the park has hosted acts and artists such as George Thorogood & the Destroyers, Legally Blonde the Musical, the Counting Crows, Sound of Music and others. Clearly, Wolf Trap National Park is but another asset in Fairfax County’s facility infrastructure, allowing officials to effectively utilize arts and culture for economic development.

Some may question why the achievements of a national park are being touted as part of a county accomplishment. Yet while Wolf Trap was established in an act of Congress, its continued existence, popularity and success is in large part due to Fairfax County’s commitment and intergovernmental cooperation.

One of the many examples of such collaboration is the incorporation of Wolf Trap National Park into the local public transportation system. The Fairfax Connector’s Bus Route 480 provides transportation both to and from every event being featured at the Filene Center. As a result, performances are now available to a much larger audience, thereby increasing the economic benefits to the county.

In addition, Wolf Trap National Park and Fairfax County officials work together to provide the community with many artistic programs. One of these is the STEM/STEAM Institute in Fairfax County. This effort offers science, technology, engineering, mathematics and arts classes for local youth. Not only does the project focus on students, but the teachers as well. Each summer, instructors may attend the 5-day Summer Institute Program for Teaching Artists in order to mold and refine their teaching methods.

Despite being a national park, Wolf Trap has clearly become integrated with the government, functions and economy of Fairfax County. Acknowledging the benefits of its presence, officials have made an increased effort to make its programs—and consequently its economic advantages—more significant to the area.

**Howard County, Maryland**

**Overview**

Typically, Howard County has been able to post impressive employment statistics that are indicative of its solid economic base. From 1990 to 2000, the county created over 52,000 jobs at a growth rate of 64.4 percent. During this same period, population only grew 32.3 percent, resulting in Howard County’s impressively low unemployment rate. While much of this growth can be attributed to technological businesses—the county’s leading industry—the fact that these numbers have been largely sustained throughout the decade and well into this recession is due to the area’s varied economic base. Arts and culture play a strong role in contributing to Howard County’s diverse economy.

Like other counties with a healthy arts scene, Howard County benefits from its state’s strong artistic environment. In the past decade, Maryland has been ranked eighth in the United States in support for the arts. Each year, the state legislature has consistently appropriated over $400 million to artistic and cultural activities. While this number has decreased in the current recession, this support has been sufficient sustain an artistic community that consistently produces economic benefits.

In central Maryland, arts organizations generate over $525 million in expenditures annually, while supporting 11,092 jobs. This stems from the more than 100 artistic and cultural establishments in Howard County. The events sponsored and produced by these groups have experience a drastic and sustained increase in attendance. While the county’s population increased by 13 percent in the 5 years leading up to 2000, during that same period attendance at arts events jumped nearly 90 percent. Not only do county
residents attend these events, but they also generate sufficient sales to make the arts an economically viable opportunity. In a recent survey, 43 percent of residents said their households spend more than $51 every month on tickets, fees or admission to arts events, while 16 percent indicated they spend over $100 a month.

Clearly, this strong arts economy in Howard County was developed over time through financial support and planning. A key element to the county’s artistic and cultural plan was its ten-year plan for the arts entitled ArtsVision 2001.

**ArtsVision 2001**

As its name suggests, ArtsVision 2001 was adopted in order to set goals to guide the arts and culture policies of Howard County in time for the start of the new millennium. By identifying twelve sets of objectives—in areas such as public arts, funding, community participation and education among others—county officials were able to clearly and consistently pursue policies that effectively expanded the presence of art in Howard County.

One particular aim of ArtsVision 2001 was to improve the condition of existing venues while also constructing new art facilities. As a result, officials planned and executed extensive renovations of the existing Howard County Center for the Arts. By adding a black box theatre, while expanding the facility itself, allowed the Center to become a multipurpose arts space that benefitted the entire community. In addition, this objective to improve art facilities inspired Howard County officials, the Arts Council, and the Public School system to collaborate in the construction of the Jim Rouse Theatre for the Performing Arts adjacent to Wilde Lake High School in Columbia, Maryland. This two-story, $1.2 million state-of-the-art facility contains a dance studio, arts room, band room, instructional theatre and a 739-seat main theater, all available for both artistic instruction and professional performances.

As the Jim Rouse Theatre’s construction demonstrates, ArtsVision 2001 required different sectors of Howard County to work together creating partnerships in order to successfully meet its goals. Yet another example of these partnerships is the Baltimore City Arts and Cultural Organizations grants program administered by the Howard County Arts Council and financially supported by the Howard County Government. Through this program, grants vital to the continued operation of arts organizations are given to nine establishments annually. In this way, artistic and cultural groups may compete for a needed source of funding, in accordance with the goals of ArtsVision 2001. Howard County residents experience the benefits of this grant program, as surveys indicate they make over 250,000 visits annually to these organizations.

Through the ArtsVision 2001 Program, Howard County was able to establish a sturdy infrastructure for its artistic and cultural organizations. As a result, they have continued to contribute to the area’s economy, even nine years after the conclusion of the initiative. Even through the recession, the economic benefits of arts and culture are clear in Howard County.

**Miami-Dade County, Florida**

**Overview**

More than just diversifying the local economy, arts and culture plays a vital role in supporting employment and economic activity Miami-Dade County. Indeed, the *New York Times* has written that “Miami has matured from a fleeting, skin-deep showcase into an unlikely cultural oasis.” The economic statistics clearly demonstrate the impressive effect of the arts industry in that county.

The arts alone produce $922 million in local economic impact each year within Miami-Dade County. The constant presence of performances, artistic exhibits and cultural activities draws a consistent flow of tourists as audience members. It is estimated that these attendees spend $501.9 million each year on restaurants, hotels, retail and other items. When this is coupled with the $420.1 million that non-profit arts organizations contribute to the economy, arts and culture generates nearly $1 billion in Miami-Dade economic activity. This impact has been noticed by community entrepreneurs, as surveys indicated that more than 75 percent of local
businesses view the county’s vibrant artistic and cultural activities as important or very important to their businesses.

Because arts and culture have such an impact on the local economy, Miami-Dade County officials have invested extensively in the industry. Currently, the county plans on investing over $1 billion in improving and constructing cultural and artistic facilities across the community. More than simply enhancing arts infrastructure, this investment indirectly increases tax revenue for the county. A recent study suggested that cultural organizations produce $5 in tax revenue for every $1 invested by the county. Clearly, this monumental investment by Miami-Dade County should provide both the county and its residents with even greater returns.

With more infrastructure comes more tourists, and with more tourists should come more economic benefits for the county. In addition to the monetary investments, Miami-Dade has created the Culture Shock Miami Program that is designed to increase support of the arts among young people.

**Culture Shock Miami**

In Miami-Dade County, over 3.2 million individuals attend cultural events every year. Recognizing that this offers great economic benefit to the area, county officials have sought to attract a new, untapped audience to attend such events and contribute to the local economy—teenagers and youth. As a result, Miami-Dade County officials have developed the Culture Shock Miami Program.

Initiated by the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, Culture Shock is designed to expose the next generation of art audiences to local art and culture by increasing Miami’s cultural brand recognition, ticket sales and attendees within its target audience of high school and college aged students ages 13-22. Available free of charge through the Apple iTunes store, a newly developed and launched iPhone/iTouch application delivers direct and up-to-the-minute event information and ticket availability alerts to students via a patron’s iTouch or iPhone.

This integrated hi-tech system practically eliminates the difficulty of searching for arts events, delivering program details, content and ticket availability immediately to the prospective ticket buyer. The versatility of the program and applications are further expanded through an already highly popular web site www.cultureshockmiami.com by supplying eligible students with customized access that continuously promotes and facilitates $5 ticket purchases to a wide variety of live cultural experiences. In addition, the program provides Miami-Dade County’s performing arts organizations and museums a cost-free marketing vehicle to sell available seats and/or admissions, and to broadcast performance news and behind-the-scenes video footage.

Clearly, this initiative opens arts and culture to a whole new and younger audience, which in turn will continue Miami-Dade County’s healthy artistic and cultural economy. The economic benefits of arts and culture show no signs of slowing in Miami-Dade County, due in part to the Culture Shock Miami Program.

**Napa County, California**

**Overview**

To the north of the San Francisco Bay Area lies Napa County, California. Known worldwide as one of the best wine growing regions in the globe, Napa Valley invests heavily in maintaining a beneficial environment for its wineries and supporting industries. While the wine business clearly is the focus of the county’s economy, arts and culture have always played an important supplemental role.
Nonprofit art organizations have a far reaching economic impact within Napa County. Together, their owners, patrons, audiences and artists produce over $32 million in regional revenue, directly contributing $17.3 million in resident household income. Supporting nearly 1,000 fulltime jobs, the over 100 arts and cultural organizations in Napa County also generate $3.7 million in state and local government receipts.

Clearly, the artistic and cultural endeavors of Napa County offer great economic benefits such as increased spending and government revenues to the surrounding area. However, county officials have recognized that these numbers, while substantial, do not harness the full economic potential of the arts in the area. As a result, Napa County has begun to make a sincere effort to support arts and culture and recognize the community’s artistic capability.

These policies are broad and have a long term focus on the inclusion of arts and culture in the community. As a result, improving arts education has become a big initiative. This effort has improved and created partnerships between the county’s artistic and cultural organizations, Napa County officials and the area’s education system. By establishing solid art programs in each of the county’s 18 schools, over 4,000 children are now exposed to arts and culture, increasing the likelihood that they contribute to the local creative economy.

Napa County’s long term objectives for the improvement of arts, culture and the economy go beyond education. In fact officials in tend to address funding, resources and the overall environment of the arts in the county. Their policies are all guided by the Napa County Community Cultural Plan.

Napa County Community Cultural Plan

Even in the midst of the economic recession in 2008, the Napa County Arts Council, using community input, developed a comprehensive road map to improve the state of arts and culture in the county. Titled the Napa County Community Cultural Plan, the document is a blueprint to strengthen a sector that had yet to reach its potential economic benefit within the area. In total, the plan focused on strategic directions the officials believed were vital to the success of Napa County’s artistic endeavors.

The first goal of the Cultural Plan is to increase awareness of the arts within Napa County. With increased publicity, not only would tourists realize the potential attractions in the area, but entrepreneurs and potential owners would also take advantage of the county’s healthy environment for artistic businesses. In accordance with this strategic direction, the county has devised a community awareness campaign targeting local arts, while at the same time identifying events and organizations that are potential tourist attractions.

Another goal of Napa County’s Community Cultural Plan is to ensure that all of the community’s various cultural traditions were reflected in the campaign. In this way, the artistic and cultural endeavors of the county would receive both support and contributions from all residents, increasing the likelihood of the program’s economic success. Consequently, officials aim to create and support attractions that are affordable and accessible to both locals and tourists.

The plan also aims to spur the creation of effective and constructive art policies. Officials have done this by reaching out to a group of arts advocates within the county. From these meetings, Napa County has identified a need for public funding sources for local arts and culture. In addition, county officials intend to develop incentives to encourage and reward the construction and renovation of art facilities.

As an overarching theme of the Cultural Plan, the final objective of the county is to maximize arts resources within the community. A key tenet of this strategy is to develop partnerships within the community between the artistic organization and parties that can assist them. For example, officials have been encouraging various vintners with interest in the arts to form a collective group of supporters. This group could offer various venues and funding for the arts community and consequently generate economic benefits for both sides.
References


National Association of Counties


