

## ABOUT LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES

This report about the fiscal year 2019 findings from the *Profile of Local Arts Agencies* provides a comprehensive overview of the local arts agency field.

The nation's approximately 4,500 local arts agencies (LAAs) promote, support, and develop the arts at the local level, ensuring a vital presence for the arts throughout America's communities. LAAs are diverse in their makeup—and have many different names and embrace a spectrum of artistic disciplines. But each LAA, in its own way, works to sustain the health and vitality of the arts and artists locally, while also striving to make the arts accessible to all members of its community. Each LAA in America is unique to the community that it serves, and each evolves as its community evolves. While no two LAAs are exactly alike in name, programming or mission, they share one or more of these seven programs and services in common:

1. **Advocacy and Policy:** Virtually 100% of LAAs advocate for arts funding and arts friendly policies as well as serve as thought leaders and policy creators on a wide range of topics and issues—arts education, creative economy, economic development, community development, workforce development, cultural tourism, disaster preparedness/response, research, health, inter-cultural understanding, and the community's quality of life.
2. **Facilities Development and Management:** 62% of LAAs are responsible for the development and management of arts and cultural facilities and venues such as artist live/work space, rehearsal and performance spaces, gallery space, hands-on art centers, or creative entrepreneur incubators.
3. **Funding and Financing:** 76% of LAAs provide direct investment in the arts and culture community through grants and other financial support programs for artists and arts and cultural organizations or groups such as operating or project support grants, and technical assistance or capacity building grants, non-competitive project/program sponsorships, fellowships, grants for professional development training or special project stipends, public and private matches for projects, crowdfunding initiatives, leveraging funds via bonds, facilitating collaboratives or micro-lending.
4. **Partnerships and Planning:** 91% of LAAs partner with other local organizations and/or agencies to address community needs and make their communities more healthy, vibrant, and equitable. This may include working with public schools, the Convention and Visitor Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, health and human service providers, colleges and universities, and a wide range of city and state government agencies.
5. **Programs and Events:** 84% of LAAs present their own cultural programming to their community. These may include after-school arts education programs, public art, free concerts in the park, exhibitions, heritage and preservation efforts, festivals, and special events.

6. Services: 92% of LAAs provide a portfolio of services to other arts organizations including professional and creative workforce development workshops or classes incubation and fiscal sponsor services, marketing, administrative/back office services, box office, or discipline-specific workshops and trainings.
7. Visibility: 66% of LAAs leverage their broader network and resources to drive public goodwill and communicate the importance and value of arts and culture in communities. This may include community-wide marketing campaigns, cultural tourism, civic engagement initiatives, arts and cultural event calendars, festivals, multi-sector programs, research, convenings/focus groups, or media partnerships.

**LAAs have many different names, including:**

- Arts Council, Arts & Humanities Council, Cultural Council
- Arts Commission, Cultural Commission, Heritage Commission
- Cultural Affairs Department
- Cultural Alliance
- Arts Center
- Business Council for the Arts
- United Arts Fund
- Any creative name that suggests their work such as ArtsWave (Cincinnati, Ohio), 4Culture (King County, Washington), and Allied Arts

**LAAs operate in many different forms:**

- Within a city or county government agency, department, division, or facility
- Nonprofit 501(c)3 organization
- Private community organization
- For-profit organization
- Hybrid nonprofit/for-profit partnership or organization

**LAAs affect community health and vitality in many different ways:**

- Help ensure broad accessibility and public engagement with the arts culturally, socially, educationally, and economically
- Build healthy, vibrant and equitable communities
- Enable diverse forms of arts and culture to thrive
- Impact the economic health and growth of a community through vibrant arts programming
- Support and advance arts and culture at the local level and bring communities together
- Connect elected official and business leaders to the power of arts in the community

**LAAs use many different methods to impact the community through the arts:**

- Provide financial support such as grants and contracts to the local arts community (e.g., community theater or symphony, arts festivals, individual artists)
- Present cultural programming (e.g., art classes, lectures, exhibitions)
- Manage cultural facilities (e.g., performance or exhibition spaces, museums, arts incubators, live/work spaces)
- Provide services to artists and arts organizations (e.g., professional development, visibility and advocacy support, technical assistance, group health insurance)
- Participate in and often lead community cultural planning (e.g., assessing community's cultural needs and mapping an implementation plan)
- Advocate for and promote arts-friendly policies (e.g., ensure funding and government policies that support the arts and arts education)
- Forge partnerships with elected officials, business leaders, and other community representatives (e.g., chambers of commerce, school districts, faith-based organizations)
- Manage a public art program (e.g., public art installations, percent for art programs, beautify community parks and neighborhoods)

**LAAs utilize many different sources of funding:**

- Local government (e.g., general fund allocations, non-arts agencies, or dedicated tax revenues such as a "sales tax for the arts")
- Grants from a state arts agency and other statewide agencies
- Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and other federal agencies
- Contributions from foundations and businesses
- Donations from individuals
- Membership dues, registration fees, and other sources of earned revenue
- United arts fund campaign contributions and workplace giving programs