



CULTURAL DATA PROJECT

An Overview of the Cultural Data Project

The Cultural Data Project is governed by a collaborative partnership, consisting of:

Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council
The Heinz Endowments
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
The Pew Charitable Trusts
William Penn Foundation

The CDP is a powerful, online management tool designed to strengthen arts and cultural organizations. This unique system allows users to track their own financial and programmatic performance over time and to benchmark themselves against comparable organizations in specific disciplines, geographic regions and budget sizes.

Mission

The CDP's mission is to strengthen the national nonprofit arts and cultural sector by collecting and disseminating comprehensive, high-quality longitudinal data that supports fact-based decision-making in three ways:

- It helps arts and cultural organizations improve their financial management and services to their communities.
- It enables researchers, advocates and policy makers to better tell the story of the sector's assets, contributions and needs.
- It helps funders more effectively plan for and evaluate their individual and collective grantmaking activities.

The CDP is an emerging national model for data collection for the arts and cultural sector. Organizations, funders and researchers alike will have access to the best data available, as reported by the organizations themselves.

History

In 2004, the CDP was launched in Pennsylvania as a statewide, web-based data collection system for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. The Pew Charitable Trusts operates the CDP on behalf of the CDP's Governing Group, which has provided oversight for the CDP since its inception. The CDP's Governing Group consists of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, The Heinz Endowments, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and William Penn Foundation.

Based on the success in Pennsylvania, Maryland was the first additional state to adopt the project in 2007, followed by California in 2008. Since then, the CDP was implemented in Arizona, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and Ohio and it is scheduled to launch in Rhode Island, Vermont and the District of Columbia in 2011. Conversations about bringing the CDP to additional states are also taking place in Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

OPERATED BY THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

2005 MARKET STREET, SUITE 1700, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103-7077

TOLL FREE 877-707-DATA FAX 215.575.4888 www.culturaldata.org

Goals

The CDP seeks to impact the cultural community in the following ways:

- Individual arts and cultural organizations improve their financial and operational capacity to serve their constituents better.
- Fact-based information advances learning and exchange among the cultural sector, policymakers and civic leaders.
- Funders plan for and evaluate their individual and collective grantmaking activities more effectively.

In order to achieve these goals, the CDP plans to be in operation in as many as 22 states by the end of 2014, engaging up to 70 percent of the potential user-base of cultural organizations throughout the country. Through this expansion plan, all geographic regions—including states with a large number of users and areas with diverse populations—and organizations of varying disciplines and sizes will be represented.

Benefits of participation

Participation in the CDP helps the sector as a whole by providing arts and cultural organizations access to tools that can build their financial and management capacity. The CDP provides support to all participants through toll-free help desk and user support assistance, free access (by phone) to a team of financial consultants, statewide on-location workshops and online training. The CDP help desk and user support staff are highly-trained in the functionality of the CDP and have experience in the cultural community, and the financial consultants specialize in accounting for nonprofits.

The data collected by the CDP can also be used by researchers and advocates to make a strong case to policymakers for supporting the arts and cultural sector, and can increase the cultural policy exchange among these groups using fact-based information. As each new funder agrees to participate, it is creating shared benefit for the arts and cultural organizations and the sector. Furthermore, by accepting the reports generated through the CDP as the core set of organizational and financial data, funders are easing the burden of the application process on their applicants and ensuring receipt of the most reliable information about the organizations.

As a centralized, stand-alone repository for historical financial and organizational information, the CDP is compatible with both online and paper-based application processes; there is no technical integration required. Since the CDP is not a common grant application, narrative questions, project-specific information and evaluative questions will remain in each participating funder's existing application materials. Applicants will provide participating funders with the CDP data in a report, customized for the needs of each funding program.

CDP data

The types of data collected include basic organizational information, revenues, expenses, marketing activities, balance sheet items, investments, loans and a wide range of non-financial information (including contributor and attendance numbers, facilities, pricing, capital and endowment campaigns, program activity and staffing). Organizations of all sizes can complete the online form using only the line items applicable to them. This standardized form, used by thousands of organizations in all the participating states, will allow for accurate comparisons across regions.

OPERATED BY THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

2005 MARKET STREET, SUITE 1700, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103-7077

TOLL FREE 877.707.DATA FAX 215.575.4888 www.culturaldata.org

The information collected by the CDP is based on categorizations used by auditors in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. In contrast, the IRS Form 990 is used by the Internal Revenue Service as an indicator that nonprofit organizations are meeting the minimum requirements for tax exempt status. As a result, the CDP captures more extensive financial and programmatic information that can better tell the story of each organization as part of a grant application, report to a board or research publication.

Research

Data from the CDP have been used in several major reports, including Arts and Economic Prosperity III, a report by Americans for the Arts, and Portfolio, a report by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance using analysis by the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, Portfolio's findings were cited by city council members and used to support the passage of a city bond that provided \$72 million for capital projects undertaken by the city's arts and cultural organizations. By clearly demonstrating the impact of the arts on the region, the report's findings led to increased funding for the city's grant program and the reopening of the shuttered Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. In Maryland, data from the Maryland State Arts Council's applicants will be used by Americans for the Arts to produce an annual report designed to enhance statewide advocacy for the arts.

Cost

The philanthropic business model for the CDP expansion distributes the ongoing costs of operating the project among a collaboration of private and public funders in each state. This model ensures broad use of the project by many funders, ensuring the sustainability of the project and enabling the CDP to streamline the grant application process for cultural organizations throughout the state.

The cost of bringing the CDP to a state is based on both the number of arts and cultural organizations that will use it and the number of funders that will require it as part of their application processes. All services are provided at cost.

In each participating state, ongoing financial support is necessary in order for CDP staff to provide assistance to organizations, as well as continuous training designed to increase understanding of their financial and organizational data and encourage extensive use of the reporting tools available through the CDP.

For more detailed information about the Cultural Data Project, please contact Neville Vakharia, Project Director, at 215.575.4873 or nvakharia@pewtrusts.org.