

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Cultural Data Project Gives Massachusetts Arts Groups New Technology to Improve Management

Great Barrington, MA—Hundreds of arts organizations across Massachusetts have access to new technology to help them strengthen their management capacity and demonstrate their impact in communities, thanks to the Massachusetts Cultural Data Project, a new online statewide system that launches today. The Massachusetts Cultural Data Project is the first comprehensive data collection and grant application tool available to the state's arts organizations. Massachusetts is the first state in New England to participate.

“The Cultural Data Project will help our organizations turn financial and attendance data into powerful planning and diagnostic tools,” said Anita Walker, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. “This couldn't have come to Massachusetts at a better time. The Cultural Data Project will help organizations navigate in a difficult economy and ensure their fiscal health.”

The Cultural Data Project (CDP) started in Pennsylvania in 2004 and launched in Maryland in 2007, California in 2008, and in Illinois and New York in 2009. The Pew Charitable Trusts operates the project for each state, helping to ensure comparable, standardized data across regions. The CDP is expanding to other states across the country each year.

The Massachusetts Cultural Data Project gives participating arts organizations the technology to ease the challenges they often face with collecting and organizing information for grant applications and financial reports. Once users supply the wide range of data—topics like revenue, employment, staffing, and attendance—the CDP allows them to organize their information to meet each participating funder's requirements.

The CDP then serves as a data repository so that groups can track their individual data and trends over time,

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generate various reports and compare how they operate relative to their peers. For example, a theater organization could both analyze how effective its marketing dollars are in generating ticket revenues and increasing audiences, and compare its annual attendance to groups of similar organizations in its community, or communities in other CDP states. This comprehensive, standardized data collection will also allow the cultural community as a whole to articulate and provide evidence for the sector's assets, needs and contributions to the state.

“We are delighted that the many vibrant cultural organizations in Massachusetts will be joining their peers around the country to be part of the Cultural Data Project,” said Marian Godfrey, senior director of Culture Initiatives at The Pew Charitable Trusts. “Participation from Massachusetts and other states significantly expands the scope of project and will help us move toward better understanding, and ultimately strengthening the cultural field at large.”

There will be a training session for all Berkshire County cultural organizations held at Hancock Shaker Village on August 4, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. This is part of a series of workshops throughout the state to introduce this new technology to groups To register and for more information go to www.massculturaldata.org.

The launch of the Massachusetts Cultural Data Project has been made possible through the leadership of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Barr Foundation, The Boston Foundation, and the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.

“The nonprofit cultural community comprises a significant part of Berkshire County's economy,” said Jennifer Dowley, president of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. “The Cultural Data Project will at long last provide real figures across all areas of operations so that we can truly understand the depth of the cultural organizations' connection to our community.”

The Cultural Data Project was developed and is overseen by a collaboration of Pennsylvania funding agencies that includes the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, The Heinz Endowments, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Pittsburgh Foundation and the William Penn Foundation.

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation builds stronger communities and improves the quality of life for all residents of Berkshire County, MA; Columbia County and northeast Dutchess County, NY; and northwest Litchfield County, CT. Thanks to its generous donors, in 2008 Berkshire Taconic distributed nearly \$9 million in

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