Better Together: Public + Private Arts Funding

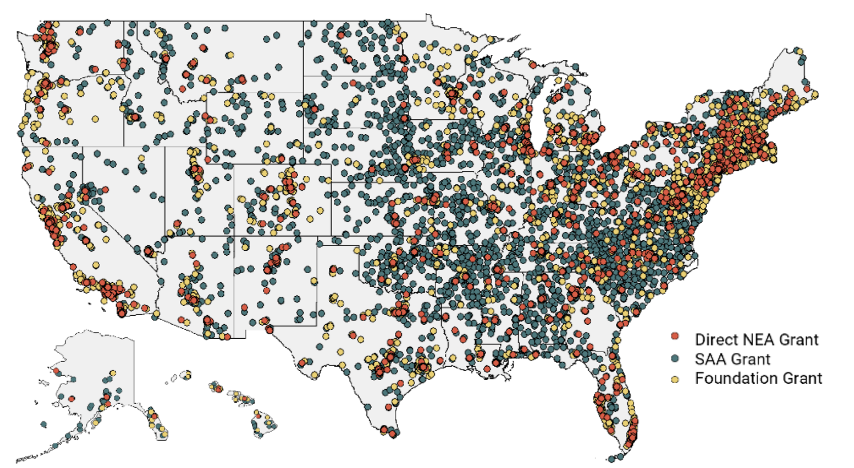
Nonprofit arts organizations deploy a dynamic mixture of funds. A combination of public and private investments ensures access to the arts for all American communities.

Earned income from admissions, program fees, space rentals and business ventures comprises the majority—around 60%—of arts organization revenues. Arts organizations are highly entrepreneurial in their development of these revenue streams. But they do not cover the whole cost of arts productions. To keep admissions affordable for the public, arts organizations secure additional resources from public and private sources.

Philanthropic contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations comprise around 31% of nonprofit arts organization revenues. While this provides essential support, many foundations have limited missions that focus on specific geographies or art forms. As a result, philanthropic funding tends to be concentrated in urban communities, the East and West Coasts, and larger institutions.

Public funding for the arts is the smallest slice of the pie, at a mere 9% of all arts organization income. But those modest government dollars achieve community access that other funding does not:

- Together, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and state arts agencies award funds in every state and jurisdiction and in all 435 congressional districts.
- NEA funds reach 678 more counties than private foundations do.



Data sources: 2018 state arts agency grant data drawn from Final Descriptive Reports; 2018 National Endowment for the Arts direct grants data; 2012 data from the Foundation Center / Candid showing grants of $10,000 or more awarded by the 1,000 largest U.S. foundations

- 14% of Americans live in rural areas. However, only 6-7% of foundation giving reaches rural areas. In contrast, 11% of NEA-funded projects and 19% of state arts agency awards reach rural areas.
- 34% of NEA grants and 32% of state arts agency grants go to high-poverty communities.

NASAA is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit information clearinghouse representing the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts councils. Learn more about the public return on investment in the arts at www.nasaa-arts.org.