

# NEW DIRECTIONS IN STATE ARTS AGENCY GRANT MAKING

## WORKSHOP AGENDA

### MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

NASAA Annual Conference - Boise, Idaho – September 2005

State arts agencies award more than 28,000 grants across the country each year. To track the distribution of taxpayer dollars and keep us accountable to our funders, we collect substantial information about those grants. But what do we know about the ultimate effects of our funding? Can we get beyond “budget size and butts in seats” to measure more meaningful dimensions of participation and impact? This workshop will explore additional kinds of data that could be authentic and informative for us, our grantees and the authorities who control our resources. Participants will generate ideas about the types of indicators that could be tracked and will explore creative methods for collecting information. This session is the latest extension of the popular “New Directions in State Arts Agency Grant Making” series first launched by NASAA in 2003.

**Facilitator:** Kelly J. Barsdate - Director of Research, Policy and Evaluation - NASAA

**Presenters:** Maria-Rosario Jackson, Ph.D. - Senior Research Associate - The Urban Institute  
Emily Ellis - Information Services Manager - NASAA

#### **I. Introduction**

Overview of measurement challenges and imperatives faced by state arts agencies.

#### **II. What can be measured?**

Based on her years of field research in communities across the United States, Maria-Rosario Jackson will share observations about the kinds of information and indicators that can be useful for policy decision making. She'll suggest how various dimensions of cultural vitality—especially participation and impact—might be measured by grant-makers.

#### **III. What data do state arts agencies currently collect?**

NASAA has recently completed an inventory of the questions that twelve state arts agencies ask on their grantee application and final report forms. Emily Ellis and Kelly Barsdate will present preliminary findings from this study of the statistical and narrative information that state arts agencies are collecting.

#### **IV. Implications**

What are the strengths of current data collection practices? Where are the gaps? Looking ahead, what are some formal and informal strategies that state arts agencies can use to strengthen their knowledge-base?

NEW DIRECTIONS IN  
STATE ARTS AGENCY GRANT MAKING



## Measuring What Matters

Kelly J. Barsdate, NASAA  
Maria-Rosario Jackson, The Urban Institute  
Emily Ellis, NASAA

NASAA Annual Meeting

Boise, Idaho, September 2005

- That which is observable is data.
- Data is measurable.
- Frameworks and comparisons make measurement meaningful.
- Frameworks reflect our values and aspirations – what “matters.”
- What matters to whom and for what purpose are pivotal questions.
- SAAs make choices.

- Explore one “framework” for thinking about what matters
- Reflect on current SAA data collection practices
- Model a process
- Emphasis on the grant transaction

## Cultural Vitality in Communities: Measuring What Matters

Maria-Rosario Jackson, Ph.D.



Culture, Creativity, and Communities Program  
at the Urban Institute



### FROM PRINCIPLES TO A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Definitions depend on the values and realities of the community.
2. Participation spans a wide range of actions and artistic disciplines.
3. Opportunities for participation rely on arts-specific *and* other resources.
4. Creative expression is infused with multiple meanings and purposes.



#### DOMAINS OF INQUIRY AND MEASUREMENT

1. Presence
2. Participation
3. Systems of Support
4. Impacts



### Cultural Vitality

- *Cultural vitality* is expressed in a community's capacity for and practice of creating, disseminating, supporting, and validating creative expression/art on its own terms.



### Questions we should be asking as a society:

- What kinds of engagement contribute to a community's cultural vitality and other aspects of a community? Making art? Teaching? Learning? Validating? Supporting?
- Do opportunities for these kinds of artistic engagement exist and is there evidence of such engagement?
- What mechanisms exist to support the above?



### Towards Documenting Impacts

- Need better data about presence, participation, and systems in order to make empirically based assertions about impacts within a policy context
- Practitioners' experience and wisdom should guide inquiry about impacts
- Good qualitative information is important



### Cautions about “proving” impacts

- Resist the temptation to make grand claims about “impacts”
- Don't strive to prove causality
- Most non-profit arts organizations are not in a position to take on additional data collection without additional resources.



**What can state arts agencies do to obtain better information?**

- Be clear about how the information will be used.
- Try to collect consistent data from grantees over time and across agencies, if possible
- Be realistic about what information can be collected reliably.
- Get familiar with data sources outside of the arts field that might be relevant to understanding possible impacts



**The Urban Institute  
Culture, Creativity, and Communities Program**

**Maria-Rosario Jackson, Director**  
[mjackson@ui.urban.org](mailto:mjackson@ui.urban.org)

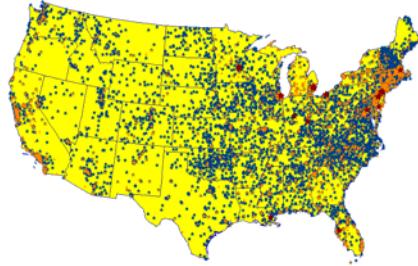
**NEW DIRECTIONS IN  
STATE ARTS AGENCY GRANT MAKING**

**What data do state arts agencies currently collect about grants and grantees?**

## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

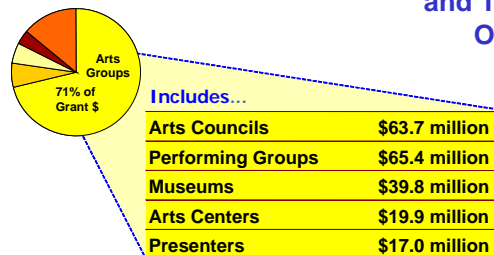
Applicant Location  
and Geographic  
Information



## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

Applicant Discipline  
and Type of Artist or  
Organization



## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

Basic Activity  
Descriptors

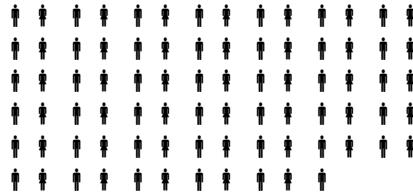
Funded Activity Types

	\$ Million	% Total
Operating Support	\$ 117.1	38%
Arts Education	\$ 79.2	26%
Project Support	\$ 65.7	22%
Capital Const./Maintenance	\$ 18.0	6%
Artistic Development*	\$ 16.5	5%
Regranting	\$ 14.5	5%

## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

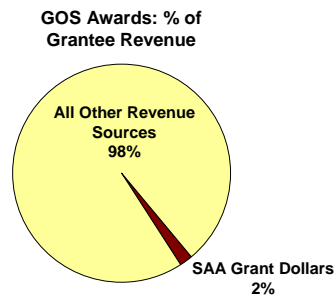
**Total Artists, Youth and Individuals Participating**



## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

**Matching Funds & Sources of Award Dollars**



## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

**Project/Cash Budget Details** [for staff and panel review]

**EXPENSES**  
 Personnel – artistic  
 Personnel – management  
 Marketing  
 Artist fees  
 Travel / transportation  
 Materials  
 Facility rental / mortgage  
 Taxes  
 Insurance  
 Etc...

**REVENUE**  
 Admissions  
 Sales / service fees  
 Memberships  
 Corporate  
 Foundation  
 Individual gifts  
 Government  
 Interest income  
 Royalties  
 Etc...

## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

**Project/Cash Budget Details** [for staff and panel review]

**Demographics** [for documenting distribution and understanding communities served]

- County designations
- Population size
- Race and ethnicity
- Age
- Household income
- Etc...

## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

**Project/Cash Budget Details** [for staff and panel review]

**Demographics** [for documenting distribution and understanding communities served]

**Descriptive Narratives** [for staff and panel review]

- Mission and history of organization
- Project and program descriptions
- Information on the community
- What applicants hope to achieve
- Marketing strategies
- Etc...

## Current Scope of Data Collection

**Required National Standard Fields** [24 items used for grants management and reporting to the NEA]

**Project/Cash Budget Details** [for staff and panel review]

**Demographics** [for documenting distribution and understanding communities served]

**Descriptive Narratives** [for staff and panel review]

**Sample Materials** [for staff and panel review]

- Artistic work samples
- Programs and marketing materials
- Planning documents
- Audits
- Other documentation



# Inventory of State Arts Agency Grant Questions

...looking beyond the National Standard...

...explore qualitative dimensions...

...a springboard for policy discussion...

**Are we measuring what matters?**

## Inventory of SAA Grant Questions



## Inventory of SAA Grant Questions



## Sample Operating Support Programs

General Operating Support  
Challenge Grant Program  
Institutional Presenter Support  
Series Presenter Support  
Organizational Excellence  
Outreach Level 1: Technical Assistance  
Outreach Level 2: Development  
Outreach Level 3: Sustaining Support  
Capacity Building for Organizations and Communities  
Sustainability Program  
Annual Operating Support  
Long Term Operating Support  
Institutional Support Program

## Sample Project Support Programs

Project Support  
The Arts Link to Tourism and the Economy  
Arts Presentation Grants  
Culture and Tourism Partnership Grants  
Performing Arts on Tour  
Adams Arts Program  
Fee Support for Touring Companies  
Special Project Support  
Literary Program Support  
Performing Arts Program Support  
Visual Arts Program Support  
Touring/Presenting  
Arts Innovation Program  
Quarterly Project Support

## Sample Community Development or Participation Programs

Arts Build Communities Grant Program  
Arts Access Program  
Community Touring  
Understanding Participation  
Community Arts Development Grant Program  
Statewide Audience Development Initiative  
Take Part!  
Building Arts Participation  
Community Arts Collaboration  
Learning Audiences  
Public Participation Project  
Arts Participation Initiative

## Information Examined in the Inventory

- Adjudication criteria
- Adjudication criteria weights
- Application form questions
- Final report questions
- Work sample and documentation requirements
- Checklists

## Analysis Themes

**Management & finances** of the organization  
 Artistic **quality** of project/program  
**Planning** and **evaluation** practices  
**Participation**  
**Partnerships**  
 Reaching **underserved** constituencies  
 Alignment with **community needs**  
**Impact** of the project/program  
**Advocacy** activities

## How Themes Appear in Grant Criteria

*Out of all 217 grant criteria statements, how many primarily address...?*

Management/Financial	28%
Quality	19%
Planning and Evaluation	13%
Participation	11%
Partnerships	4%
Underserved	4%
Community Needs	6%
Impact on Community	15%

## How Themes Appear in Grant Criteria

*What “weights” are typically assigned to grant criteria?*

	Min	Median	Max
Management/Financial	10%	<b>20%</b>	40%
Quality	15%	<b>40%</b>	60%
Planning and Evaluation	10%	<b>20%</b>	30%
Participation	20%	<b>30%</b>	33%
Partnerships	25%	<b>30%</b>	30%
Underserved	15%	<b>28%</b>	30%
Community Needs	15%	<b>25%</b>	50%
Impact on Community	17%	<b>25%</b>	40%

## Questions Talled in the Inventory

<b>Grant application ?s</b>	<b>1,631</b>
<b>Grantee final reports ?s</b>	<b>935</b>
<b>Total questions (all types)</b>	<b>2,566</b>
<b>“Unique” questions</b>	<b>~1,400</b>

## How Themes Appear in Grant Questions

*How many questions do state arts agencies ask about....?*

	Number of ?s (App and Final Report)	Percent of ?s (App and Final Report)
Management/Financial	903	35%
Quality	120	5%
Planning and Evaluation	374	15%
Participation	658	26%
Partnerships	59	2%
Underserved	107	4%
Community Needs	93	4%
Impact on Community	61	2%
Advocacy	191	7%
	<b>2,566</b>	<b>100%</b>

## How Themes Appear in Grant Questions

*How do the questions vary across  
program areas?*

	Operating Support	Project Support	Community and Participation
Management/Financial	37%	35%	31%
Quality	4%	6%	5%
Planning and Evaluation	14%	13%	18%
Participation	26%	25%	23%
Partnerships	1%	4%	3%
Underserved	5%	3%	3%
Community Needs	3%	4%	6%
Impact on Community	2%	2%	4%
Advocacy	8%	8%	7%

## Comparing Criteria with Questions

	Percent of Criteria <small>(how often used)</small>	Percent of ?s <small>(App and Final Report)</small>
Management/Financial	28%	35%
Quality	19%	5%
Planning and Evaluation	13%	15%
Participation	11%	26%
Partnerships	4%	2%
Underserved	4%	4%
Community Needs	6%	4%
Impact on Community	15%	2%
Advocacy	7%	7%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Comparing Criteria with Questions

	Percent of Criteria <small>(how often used)</small>	Median Criteria Weight <small>(when used)</small>	Percent of ?s <small>(App and Final Report)</small>
Management/Financial	28%	20%	35%
Quality	19%	40%	5%
Planning and Evaluation	13%	20%	15%
Participation	11%	30%	26%
Partnerships	4%	30%	2%
Underserved	4%	28%	4%
Community Needs	6%	25%	4%
Impact on Community	15%	25%	2%
Advocacy	7%	7%	7%
	<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Readings in Program Evaluation and  
Measurement in the Arts**  
Available from NASAA

**[www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org) [Members-Research]**  
“State Arts Agency Funding and  
Grant Making”  
National Standard Reference Center

## Kathryn Newcomer

**“It is better to be roughly right than  
precisely ignorant.”**

“...sometimes attempts to increase rigor have discouraged smaller scale and less expensive efforts to evaluate programs, leaving major gaps in the information available to the public and those responsible for the service.”

**“Measurement is a  
leadership endeavor.”**

# Thank You



The work of NASAA and of state arts agencies is strengthened in many ways through funding, data collection and programming partnerships with the National Endowment for the Arts.

The inventory of state arts agency grant questions was sponsored in part by a cooperative agreement from Arts Midwest and The Wallace Foundation.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Culture, Creativity, and Communities Program** at the Urban Institute <http://ccc.urban.org/>  
Maria-Rosario Jackson, Director  
[mjackson@ui.urban.org](mailto:mjackson@ui.urban.org)
- ***Culture Counts in Communities: A Framework for Measuring***  
[http://www.urban.org/uploadedPDF/310834\\_culture\\_counts.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedPDF/310834_culture_counts.pdf)
- **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies** research team  
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