



The Arts as a Partner in Creating a Sustainable Future

Let us envision, throughout the State of New Jersey, sustainable arts organizations that advance their artistic and organizational missions while thriving economically and serving society by preserving a healthy natural environment for future generations.

Cultural programs in New Jersey are diverse and vital, stimulating over \$1.5 billion in economic activity each year while supporting over 25,000 businesses and 87,000 jobs. The most densely populated state in the nation is home to a wide range of cultural institutions that are diverse in size and offer a full spectrum of arts disciplines including dance, theatre, music, visual artists, crafts, media arts, literature and poetry, folk arts and more. Cultural assets like theaters, museums, performing arts centers and community art centers provide economic development to downtown areas by attracting and retaining residents, retail consumers and cultural tourists. Arts organizations also enhance public and community education through programs that offer lifelong learning opportunities.

The Overall Benefits of the Arts

The arts create and sustain public value in a wide range of important ways that are intrinsic and instrumental to both individual and community advancement. They are unique and singularly important because of their power to engage people and transform lives.

The arts foster beauty, creativity, originality and vitality. They inspire, soothe, provoke and engage individuals and build social cohesion by bringing diverse people together for shared cultural experiences. The arts improve the emotional and physical health of individuals by promoting creative outlets of expression and respite from stress. They teach empathy and tolerance and help memorialize the greatest accomplishments of society, offering ways to help express communal celebration and grief.

The arts are a powerful and dynamic economic force that supports key businesses and the tourism industry. They help revitalize downtown areas by attracting and retaining residents, employees, consumers and other commercial interests, and by bringing jobs and additional revenue to municipalities.

The arts are essential to a quality education and help our children succeed as innovators and problem solvers in the 21st century workplace. Arts education promotes learning in other areas and helps reduce delinquency and crime for youth at risk. Research has thoroughly documented the value of the arts to learning basic skills at the elementary level, and as a key element in teaching children who learn more quickly with visual and auditory stimulation.

In a recent survey, New Jersey mayors indicated that the arts are a key component of municipal agendas in the following ways:

- Beautifying towns
- Enriching recreation opportunities
- Bringing people downtown
- Increasing property values
- Encouraging cross-cultural understanding
- Contributing to health and wellness
- Developing tourism

- Creating a sense of identity, place, pride
- Improving education
- Helping at-risk children

Sustainable Communities—A Wise Investment

Sustainable Jersey recognizes that the arts, culture and historic preservation are key components to a sustainable future, and offer points toward certification in these areas. The three pillars of sustainability are people, prosperity and planet, and cultural venues address all three pillars.

What the Arts can do for Prosperity:

- Create a culture of creativity and innovation
- Build a creative workforce
- Contribute to the economy and quality of life

What the Arts can do for People:

- Provide a platform for individual and community expression
- Bring diverse groups together as equals
- Increase civic engagement
- Enhance the teaching of basic skills and other subject matter

What the Arts can do for the Planet:

- Educate about the environment through the arts
- Reduce carbon footprint of arts events, festivals and exhibitions
- Make change to more sustainable lifestyles FUN!

Rahway, NJ is certified through Sustainable Jersey and recently received a prestigious Our Town grant from the National Endowment of the Arts to aid creative placemaking efforts. A 10 year planning effort with a variety of partners developed the Rahway Arts District that includes historic preservation of the Union County Performing Arts Center, a new Hamilton Stage performing arts/rehearsal and education space, and plans for 60-70 units of affordable housing for artists in collaboration with the Actors Fund Housing Development Corporation.

Arts & Culture in Downtown Rahway



Economic Development

Arts and culture are important forces behind some of the most successful cities, towns and rural areas across the state. For every \$1 spent by a cultural center there is an \$8 return on investment. Strategic investment in the arts bolsters tourism, helps businesses thrive, creates job opportunities and increases the overall quality of life in New Jersey.

In New Jersey

- Arts activity stimulates over **\$1.5 billion in economic activity** each year
- The arts community supports **25,000 businesses** and **87,000 jobs**
- Investment in the arts means **\$41 million in State tax revenue**
- **A total of 37,000 arts events** attract **18 million attendees** who spend more than **\$400 million in the local economy.**

Urban Revitalization—Greening of the Inner City



The Brass Company project is the first arts-related development in the Valley Arts District, Orange NJ. It now houses artists, nonprofit and commercial arts-related businesses.

Case Study - Valley Arts District: In 2001, [HANDS, Inc.](#), a community development corporation in Orange and East Orange, proposed the Valley Revitalization Initiative. The heart of their strategic plan included an arts district with arts-related housing, facilities and programs in the Valley neighborhood. Support from local leaders like the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs, through a grant from the [NJ State Council on the Arts](#), helped the [Valley Arts District](#) make great strides. Today Hat City Kitchen, a unique

restaurant filled with art and featuring music, directs its profits to HANDS, Inc. for community revitalization.

A wide variety of artists live and work in the [Valley Arts District](#) in renovated spaces in old factory buildings. Music and poetry festivals, curated art shows, a graphic design business run by teenagers, and new restaurants and performance spaces provide opportunities for community, creativity and celebrations of all kinds.



Case Study - [Glasstown Arts District](#) in Millville, NJ began 10 years ago. During a difficult economy in 2009, the burgeoning arts industry helped spur a net increase of 16 new businesses and 99 new jobs downtown. There are now a total of 152 private businesses in Millville and the vacancy rate at the end of 2009 was 8% (down from 11.5% at the end of 2008). Over 10 years private investment in real estate, rehabilitation and new construction totaled \$23,434,112 and public investment is nearly \$5,000,000.

Attracting Businesses, Sustaining Jobs and Preparing the Workforce

- Governors increasingly recognize the importance of the creative sector to their states' economy and ability to compete in the global marketplace. [Arts and the Economy](#), National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices
- The nonprofit arts sector in New Jersey supports 25,000 arts-related businesses which provide 87,000 jobs. [NJ Creative Industries 2009 Report](#), Americans for the Arts

National leaders recognize the arts as a vital employment sector and included funds to support jobs in the arts in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The [NJ State Council on the Arts](#) partnered with the National Endowment for the Arts to strategically distribute those funds to create and preserve arts jobs in New Jersey. The Council also focuses on job development through its ongoing grant programs including the Southern NJ Staffing Initiative and the Local Arts Staffing Initiative. Both provide multi-year support to organizations for the creation, expansion and sustainability of professional personnel that increase the capacity to serve their communities and build a brighter tomorrow.

Education--Preparing Youth with Critical Skills for a Lifetime

- Students who participate in the arts have higher math and verbal SAT scores and are less likely to drop out of high school. [Americans for the Arts](#)
- [Ready to Innovate](#), a recent study published by [The Conference Board](#), concludes that, "it is clear that the arts -- music, creative writing, drawing, dance -- provide skills sought by employers of the third millennium."
- Education in and through the arts prepares students with the skills they need most to succeed: creativity, imagination, critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving, cross-cultural understanding, and more. [Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement](#)

- Arts education has **measurable impact** on at-risk youth in **detering delinquent behavior** and truancy problems while also **increasing overall academic performance**. [YouthARTS Development Project](#)
- The arts are a cost-effective tool used by states to enhance workforce readiness for students in both the general and at-risk populations. [The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation](#), National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices

Research proves that involvement in the arts both in school and after results in the following:

- Increased ability to express anger productively
- Highly developed interpersonal skills such as communication and cooperation
- Improved attitude toward school and relationships
- Raised self-esteem and belief in self-efficacy
- Lessened number of court referrals

[Living the Arts through Language and Learning: A Report on Community-based Youth Organizations, Americans for the Arts Monograph by Shirley Brice, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#)

Public Health and Wellness

Research confirms that the arts **improve healthcare for patients and caregivers, and help lower medical costs**. Notable benefits include the following:

- Reduced length of hospital stays and fewer medical visits
- Improved patient compliance during medical procedures and self-care regimens
- Reduced use of pain and anti-anxiety medications
- Improved recovery time and therefore reduced need for higher levels of acute care
- Reduced levels of depression and improvements in quality of life variables
- Decreased use of medical interventions covered by Medicare among the aging

[Strengthening Our Nations Healthcare through the Arts: Issue Brief](#) - Americans for the Arts

Nearly half of the nation's healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and staff. New Jersey has hundreds of arts programs in healthcare facilities that improve patient medical and mental health, lower healthcare costs, and create healing environments and greater staff satisfaction

As We Age

A recent groundbreaking study provides clinical evidence that older adults who participate in the arts have:

- Significantly better overall health
- Significantly fewer falls and less hip damage
- Significantly few doctor's visits
- Reduced use of medications
- Reduced vision problems
- Significantly better scores on the Geriatric Depression Scale and the Loneliness Scale
- Increased involvement in activities

[Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults, Center on Aging, Health & Humanities, George Washington University](#)

By 2030, the 60+ age group will represent 1 in 4 New Jerseyans. The arts can be used as a tool to increase the quality of life for seniors, resulting in reduced healthcare costs and older adults who can remain independent and "age in place."

Cross-Cultural Understanding

New Jersey is one of the most diverse states in the nation. The arts are a proven platform for community-building and play multiple roles in strengthening cultural and community relations locally, nationally and around the world.



The [Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company](#) in Fort Lee, NJ is an award winning organization known for its artistic excellence as well as for its extraordinary ability to bridge cultures, combining elements of modern American dance with classical Asian traditions. The Company also offers educational programs for students of all ages that focus on integrating Chinese American heritage into contemporary dance, exploring the diversity of ideas that immigrants encounter in America, and examining the common ground between cherished tradition and dynamic innovation.

Civic Engagement

From volunteering to voting, community building to community healing, issue awareness to social action-- research shows that the arts engage people in civic life, and people who participate in the arts help foster community vitality in a wide variety of ways. In fact, arts participation can be seen as an indicator of civic and community health. People who participate in the arts:

- Engage in positive civil and individual activities at strikingly higher rates than nonparticipants
- Volunteer or do charity work in their communities at a rate of 50% as opposed to less than 20% of nonparticipants
- Engage in outdoor activities and attend sporting events at double the rate of nonparticipants
- Exercise at nearly twice the rate of non-participants and are more likely to play sports

[The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life; National Endowment for the Arts; November 2006](#)



Concerns about cyberbullying escalated in New Brunswick after the death of a Rutgers student who committed suicide after his gay sexual encounter was streamed over the internet. [George Street Playhouse](#) hosted a "Spotlight on Cyberbullying Conference" for parents and educators and provided performances of *IRL: In Real Life* for hundreds of students at local schools. This commissioned play is about four ninth graders engaged in cyberbullying through text messages, secret photos and threatening online conversations. Each performance includes a **post-performance discussion**.