



***Arts & Economic  
Prosperity III:  
The Partner Toolkit—  
Tools, Tips, Targets***

Making the Most of Your Economic Impact  
Study

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Based on Her Participation and Experience in  
Two *Arts & Economic Prosperity* Studies

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## ICON LEGEND



Reminders  
and helpful  
information to  
keep in mind



Good Tip!



Putting your  
data to work:  
strategies and  
techniques



Ideas for your  
consideration



To Do

## INTRODUCTION

Americans for the Arts' *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* (AEP III) is our most comprehensive economic impact study of the nonprofit arts industry over the last 12 years. It provides an overall picture of the national impact of the arts and a localized report for you and your community based on the arts and culture

organizations in your area. This toolkit is designed to help you make the most of your participation as a Partner in AEP III; it is our way of sharing the lessons we have learned from our research and analysis of the economic impact of the arts.

Most of the ideas presented here come from the experiences of our previous Partners and their work using our earlier studies. We are passing the ideas on to you in hope that it will serve and support your work with the results of AEP III.

The *Arts & Economic Prosperity* reports are more than just sets of numbers. They are resources and tools that our Partners use to tangibly demonstrate the value of the arts to the business community, elected officials, the media, and the general public. This toolkit will expand the ways that you can talk about the role of the arts in your community.

It's been our experience that as you include and share these data, more and more people will want to use the data, will include the data in their information, etc. As this process builds momentum, new opportunities to use the data will provide ongoing interest in this information.

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## **THE ARTS COMMUNITY**

Our experience has shown that arts and culture organizations are among your most important partners, regardless of their level of cooperation in providing the budget numbers, audience figures, and other information for this research.

AEP III provides an important opportunity for you as a local, state, or regional arts service organization to solidify your relationship with the arts organizations in your area. Most of the organizations would not have the money or the time to do this research on their own.

It is important to recognize and appreciate all of these organizations, regardless of their level of cooperation or participation. As they are behind the statistics, it is also important to keep them in the loop about the latest events as AEP III moves forward. By keeping the organizations involved, they will continue to have pride in the research and information in the report.



The results of AEP III may also develop new levels of mutual respect within and for the arts community. This research provides great news for the arts. Many organizations feel underappreciated by their community, but you are providing hard evidence of the importance of arts organizations to the community.

You may need to remind the arts and culture organizations of your strong belief in the intrinsic value of the arts and its value to education and the quality of life in the community. The purpose of this research is to provide you and the arts

community with tools to effectively communicate with influential people who need numbers and statistics.

## Working with the Arts Community



As soon as possible, meet with the directors of your community's arts and culture organizations. Thank them for their work in providing you with their statistics, audience numbers, and budget figures.



Help the leaders in your arts community feel included by giving them a sense of what their work will yield. Explain the information you will be receiving in your economic impact report. Remember that your support and enthusiasm will be reflected in their support and enthusiasm for this research.



If your group of directors is small, include other staff members, especially those who work in marketing and development. If you have a large number of directors, meet separately with the organizations' marketing and development staff members.



Hold a special meeting for the board chairs or executive committees of the arts and culture organizations. Brag about the participation of their staffs. Thank them for their work—work that has enabled this important research for your community. Give them an overview of Americans for the Arts and the AEPIII. Explain the timeline of the release of the reports for your community and the national study. Many of these board members are likely to be from the business community. They will understand the importance of economic impact and will be among your strongest allies if they are informed and involved.



Have a luncheon for the arts leadership in your community. This event does not need to be expensive; a small buffet or brown bag lunch would be fine. The point of the event is to recognize and thank them, to build their support, and to keep them informed and involved with AEPIII. Consider sending the luncheon invitations on fake hundred-dollar bills to stress the importance of their work in building the economic impact of the arts.



Above all, ask the arts and culture organizations for their suggestions about the best ways to use the upcoming economic information. Ask them how to best promote and distribute the good news about the arts and their economic impact.



As soon as you decide the date of your announcement, provide the information to the arts community and stress the importance of their attendance.

Ask each organization to use their programs for the next year to highlight AEPIII statistics. Organizations that have newsletters (emailed or hard copy) can mention one statistic in each of their newsletters. Organizations that have

performances or other events can mention the study and share a fact about the arts and economic impact in their community.

Discuss the full impact of AEP III from a national as well as a local and regional perspective. Encourage your local arts and culture organizations to view themselves as part of the national arts picture.



These statistics can be an extremely important part of an advocacy campaign for the arts community. They can use the hard data to build support for arts funding as and their own organization. Encourage their use of this research whenever possible.



After your announcement, mount large copies of the charts from AEP III (this information will be sent to you in camera-ready form) on heavy cardboard (Kinko's and other printers can do this for you). Ask the arts and culture organizations to display this in their lobbies, galleries, offices, etc. Again, this is an opportunity for the arts organizations to thank their constituents and remind them of the role they play in the economy of the community.

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## **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Regardless of your perceptions of their strengths, weaknesses and points of view, all elected officials need votes; they want and need to be part of the neighborhoods and communities that they serve; they want to be informed and prepared; they want to be part of your good news about the economic impact of the arts.



Elected officials constantly receive massive amounts of information. Don't assume that if you send them something, they will see or read it immediately.

Your elected officials represent people who support the arts as well as people who do not; they represent people who sincerely believe that government funds (local, state, or national) should not be spent to support the arts and is a frivolous waste of taxpayer dollars. The information from AEP III can be one of your most valuable tools in support of the arts in your community. You can provide your elected officials with clear information and even sample responses they can use with their constituents who don't support the arts.



### **Working with Elected Officials**

Meet with your elected officials as soon as possible to let them know about your participation in AEP III. If you already have a relationship with your elected officials, you are ahead of the game. If you don't, then get to know them. It is



important to keep your elected officials informed on a regular basis, even when you don't need their help with advocacy issues and funding. You want them to know they can count on you to provide accurate information and respond to their questions.



You're not only a constituent and a voter to your elected officials, but a valuable resource: as a leader in the arts community, you can speak on behalf of a large group of voters.



If possible, when meeting with your elected officials, include a board member who has been one of their supporters. It might be someone who has worked for them as a volunteer, given money to their campaigns, or supported them in some other way. If you don't have anyone on your board that has supported the elected official, take the most influential member of your board—an opinion leader in your community.

If it's difficult to schedule a meeting with an elected official, try to determine whether they're really busy or just don't have time to meet with you. Be aware of issues that may be urgent or critical for them, and try to time your request accordingly. If they seem to be avoiding meeting with you, ask one of your board members to request the meeting (again, involve someone who has supported their campaign or is an opinion leader in your community).

When you meet with your elected officials, describe your participation in AEPIII. Assure them that this is valuable information and explain how you believe it might be helpful to them.



Talk to them about your timeline, the economic reports you'll receive, and your plans for using the results. Leave them a short summary of this information. Give your elected officials short, one-page summaries of your economic information. Consider providing them with multiply copies so they can readily present the information to their constituencies.

Talk to them about ways they can be involved in your good news. Plan to recognize and introduce them at your announcement if at all possible.



Ask legislators that have indicated their support for the arts to sponsor a resolution recognizing the economic impact of the arts in their community (these are sometimes called "whereas documents"). Time this resolution to be presented as soon after your announcement as possible.

Someone in your city government may write resolutions using a standard format or you may be asked to draft the resolution yourself. Americans for the Arts will provide a template for this purpose.

This is an example of a resolution from the U.S. Conference of Mayors:

## ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY OF THE NONPROFIT ARTS INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, Americans for the Arts conducted a benchmark study of the national economic impact of the nonprofit arts industry in 33 communities across the United States in 1993; and

WHEREAS, it was found that the nonprofit arts industry generates \$36.8 billion annually in economic activity and supports 1.3 million jobs—from large urban to small rural communities, and that the nonprofit arts industry annually returns \$3.4 billion in federal income taxes, \$1.2 billion in state government revenue, and \$790 million in local government revenue; and

WHEREAS, Americans for the Arts will release an updated national economic impact study in June 2002, entitled *Arts & Economic Prosperity*, measuring both the direct economic impact of the nonprofit arts industry in 85 communities as well as the indirect economic impact of these culture organization's related audience expenditures; and

WHEREAS, this new *Arts & Economic Prosperity* study collected extensive survey data from more than 2,700 arts organizations and 110,000 audience attendees; and

WHEREAS, findings from the *Arts & Economic Prosperity* study reveal that America's nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion in economic activity every year—\$53 billion in spending by arts organizations and an additional \$80 billion in event-related spending by arts audiences. This economic activity results in a significant impact on the nation's economy:

Total Expenditures	\$134 billion
Full-Time Jobs	\$4.85 million
Household income	\$89.4 billion
Local Government Revenue	\$6.6 billion
State Government Revenue	\$7.3 billion
Federal Income Tax Revenue	\$10.5 billion

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors supports the findings of the *Arts & Economic Prosperity* study and urges mayors across the country to invest in nonprofit arts organizations through their local arts agencies as a catalyst to generate economic impact, stimulate business development, spur urban renewal, attract tourists and area residents to community activities, and to improve the overall quality of life in America's cities.

Elected officials want to have communities, states, and regions with strong economies and opportunity for everyone. AEPIII will help give them a better picture of the role the arts play in creating opportunity in their community.



Recognize your elected officials at every possible opportunity; they need votes and recognition.



The arts community (board, staff, patrons, volunteers, arts educators, etc) represents a large constituency. Voter research suggests that people with passion are more likely to vote in local politics. Arts supporters vote in high percentages, just slightly less than people with educational and safety concerns.



Consider designating a specific day to focus on the arts and your elected officials - an 'Arts Day,' when as many people as possible from the arts community visit their elected officials to discuss the importance of the arts. Ask arts organizations to visit at least two elected officials on that day. Present them with posters and brochures. Remind them to bring information about their organization as well. Make sure that all elected officials get several visits.

Meet with your elected officials, individually or in a group, after your announcement. Make sure that they understand and are comfortable with all the information and research from AEPIII. It is important that they're able to confidently present your findings.



Consider hosting a breakfast or luncheon meeting for your elected officials. For example, if your city council meets on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m., ask if you can provide them dinner before one of their meetings. Choose a restaurant that is close to City Hall or consider having the event catered. If your city council is small, several of your board members could each make a dish (spaghetti, salad, and bread). While they're eating, spend five minutes talking about your report.

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## **THE MEDIA**



Members of the media are in constant need of new stories, or stories with a different approach or a new angle. And you have a great story. Your story is true, your research is credible, and your facts are accurate. You have new information and a unique tale that should be of interest to a variety of audiences. You have information about the economy of your community, and the economy is a topic that affects everyone.

### **Working with the Media**

Like your elected officials, you should regularly be in touch with key members of the media even when you don't need their help.



Get to know as many people in the media as possible. Learn what they need. Be aware of their deadlines. Respect their process.

Some members of every community (including the arts) seem to have a sense of entitlement toward the media. Don't be one of them. Understand that they have a job to do just as you do.



Always be as accurate as possible with the media. If you can't talk about something for whatever reason, just tell them. Don't mislead them or give them false information.



Develop a reputation with your local media as someone who's dependable, accurate and honest.

You will receive several pieces of information from Americans for the Arts that will be helpful in your work with members of your local media:

### 1. Template Press Release

Sometimes a template press release is called the "Swiss cheese" format because it has holes (blanks) in it. With this format, you fill in the blanks with your own information and, in doing so, personalize it with the information for your own community. You then distribute it to your media outlets. It might look something like this:

#### **For Immediate Release**

Contact:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Study Shows that the Local Nonprofit Arts Industry Generates \$\_\_\_\_\_ in Economic Activity and \$\_\_\_\_\_ in Local Tax Revenues**

\_\_\_\_\_ announced today the results of a comprehensive study of the nonprofit arts and culture organizations in \_\_\_\_\_. The report is part of a national survey conducted by Americans for the Arts.

The study reveals that local nonprofit arts organizations generate \$\_\_\_\_\_ in economic activity every year, resulting in \$\_\_\_\_\_ local and state tax revenues. The \$\_\_\_\_\_ total includes \$\_\_\_\_\_ in spending by arts organizations and \$\_\_\_\_\_ in event-related spending by arts audiences.

Then list:

- facts and statistics
- information about event-related spending
- information about full-time job equivalents, household income, etc.
- comparisons of local arts audiences to other audiences, such as sports audiences

You might want to end your press release with something like this:



*Arts & Economic Prosperity* was conducted by Americans for the Arts in more than 100 communities across the country in 2006. The project economists from the Georgia Institute of Technology customized input/output analysis models for each of these communities in order to provide specific and reliable economic impact data about the nonprofit arts industry.

Alternatively, you might end your press release with quotes from your community—your board chairman, the director of your local economic development organization, the mayor, etc.

## 2. Op-ed Piece

You will also receive a sample op-ed piece (again, a template with holes to insert your own information) and a list of the other Partners that participated in the study.

## 3. Online Resources

Americans for the Arts has several [online resources](#), including sample op-eds and press releases from our previous study, *Arts & Economic Prosperity II* (AEP II). There is additional information about AEP II in the section on Resources for the Media, including:

- a summary of findings for the 91 AEP II Partners
- the 91 AEP II Partners grouped by population
- a video of the National Release Event in Nashville (June 2002)
- a listing of the organizations and communities that have participated in this and in the last two studies (this will help to illustrate the breadth of participation)



You and members of the media in your community may also find the following helpful:

A resolution, adapted unanimously by the [U.S. Conference of Mayors](#), promoting the arts as an economic development tool

Two articles from the National Governor's Association about the economic benefits of a vibrant arts industry

[Strengthening Rural Economies Through the Arts](#) (August 31, 2005)

[The Role of the Arts in Economic Development](#) (June 21, 2001)

## 4. Graphic Support Materials

The material you receive from us will also contain several colorful charts and graphs. All material will be camera-ready.

Except for your friends in radio, the media are frequently more interested in information when it includes pictures or graphics.

If you have interesting photographs of the arts in your community, it may be advantageous to include those photos with your story.

Getting your story to the right people in the media can be difficult. If you already have relationships with members of the media, then you are ahead of the game.



Develop a list of the media outlets—publications, television, radio—in your community. Prioritize that list:

Your highest priority may be the largest *newspaper* in your community, city, or region.



Your next highest priority may be your *local television stations*. If you are in a larger community, you may have three or four. In addition to news programs, some stations may have a weekly program focused on the business community. An interview on that program to discuss the economic impact of the arts would be a great opportunity.



Depending on the size of your community, you may find that niche publications (especially business focused) are a more effective demographic than the general media. A *weekly community business magazine*, and its readers, is a prime market for your information.

Your *local radio stations* are also important for getting the word out about your economic news.

Finally, consider your local public media outlets. *Local public television or radio stations* will be important to contact. Most have local information or interview programs. Some may have local programs that focus on the arts or business issues. Both of these can be important outlets for your information.



If you have a *local government access channel*, ask if it will tape and replay your public announcement. Tell them about the elected officials and others that will be involved in making your announcement.

Depending on your community, the form of media, and your relationship with them, some members of the media may prefer an interview or may want you to present your own information.



Like elected officials, members of the media also constantly receive enormous amounts of information. Don't assume that just because you have sent them something, the right people have seen it. Follow up.

If you are not sure about media priorities, ask board members and volunteers what sources they rely on for their news and information. Find out the market for each media outlet and determine if it meets your needs. If you aren't sure about a market (this is most often true for radio, which can change format in the blink of an eye), call its advertising department and ask.

## **Developing a Media Plan**

Have your media plan and timeline in place before you begin contacting the media. Get to know the members of the media. Then get them excited about your story.



Many people may ask for an advanced copy. Some may tell you they'll only cover your story if it's exclusive. Restrain from giving more than one media outlet an "exclusive" on the same information. Remember that this is a huge story with many angles. You could give the newspaper the announcement first, but have a special angle for a TV station. You could time your announcement to favor one media over another. Each community is different.



The first approach (in writing, by phone, or in person) should be personal and targeted. Tell them about the research and your timeline. Make sure they know they can count on you for accurate facts and respond to their questions.



Remind the members of the media why your information will be interesting to a variety of readers (or watchers or listeners). Discuss ways that the economic impact of the arts affects the business community, economic development planners, government officials, downtown development planners, convention and tourism affiliates, hotel and restaurant personnel, etc., ...as well as the arts community.



Develop several different stories from the AEPIII with interesting angles for different types of publications. Consider the demographics of various local and regional publications. For example, you might develop a story about reasons to visit your community to enjoy the arts for a travel publication. Or you might write a story about dining out and pairing food (or spirits) to your arts event for a cooking publication.

Be creative as possible with your story. You might trace a fictitious can of red paint through its time with a dance company or discuss the economic impact of the arts through the printing of a season brochure or the story of nails from the hardware store.



Talk to your newspaper about possibly doing a series of articles on the economic impact of the arts. Perhaps one article is focused on the direct impact of arts organizations, another on the indirect impact of arts audiences, another on the nonprofit arts as an industry, and still another might compare audiences (arts audiences and sports audiences, for example).

Contact everyone in your area with an interview show and, again, establish priorities. You could have a prominent business representative or a board member interview you about AEPIII.



Remember the importance of visuals and photographs. Americans for the Arts will provide you with colorful graphics that you can also use during your interviews and in other media. Find photographs of audience members at an opening or an exhibit. Ask arts organizations for their best photographs and remember to label and credit them.

Find a context for a story by focusing on comparisons:

Compare annual attendance at arts events to attendance at sports events.

Compare your arts employment figures to other industry figures in your community.

Give the media a statistic and then explain that the arts organizations are the 18th largest employer (or whatever your statistics are) in your area.

Compare arts and culture organizations to other employers in your area.



Relate your statistics to other popular statistics in your area. Perhaps more people attended arts events in your community last year than went to hear Cher during her most recent goodbye tour.

Your information provides an opportunity to articulate the tangible benefits of the arts. It will also stimulate discussion and show the direct impact of the arts on the local economy and local vendors.

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## **THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

The business community will be interested, intrigued, and excited by the AEPIII report and your participation in the study. Economic impact studies speak their language.



You probably have several members of the business community on your board. They are your best sources for advice regarding contacts and the distribution of

this research to the business community. Ask them to help develop your plan for reaching the business community, for establishing priorities, and for making connections.

## **Working with the Business Community**



To Do:

As soon as possible, meet with a few business leaders in your community. Tell them about AEP III, the information you'll receive, and ask for their suggestions and help contacting other business organizations in your community. It's a good idea to take a board member with you to the meeting, preferably someone that they know. Some business leaders are constantly inundated with fundraising calls, so if there is any hesitation about getting the meeting scheduled, it may be helpful to reassure them that the purpose of the meeting is only to share information.



Speaking to business organizations is also a great way get the business community interested in AEP III. They can help spread the word about the economic impact of the arts in your community. You will need to develop a priority list for these organizations, along with notes about their members and program schedules.



You probably have a community and statewide Chamber of Commerce, an economic development board, a downtown business association, a Rotary Club, a Kiwanis Club, a Lions Club, etc. You may also have a New Leadership group (frequently part of the Chamber of Commerce) or a 40-under-40 organization. These groups focus on building the community leaders of tomorrow and are important to meet with.

You may also have other organizations that are industry-focused, particularly if your community has a large concentration of specific types of businesses (e.g., an association for bankers or for those involved in real estate or insurance). Businesses may also gather in less formal structures, and again your board members should be able to advise you in this area.

Some communities have arts and business organizations such as Business Committee for the Arts, Arts and Business Committee, Business Leadership and the Arts, etc. If so, they should be very interested helping you to promote your results.



To Do:

As soon as you determine your priorities, contact these organizations to speak at one of their meetings, preferably as soon after your announcement as possible. Ask if you and a board member can share some new information with their membership regarding the economic impact of the arts in your city, state, or region. If possible, involve a current (or former) board member who is a member of your targeted organization.



Many businesses schedule their programs several months to a year in advance. You should plan meetings as soon as possible to discuss their involvement and programs. If they are booked for the next 12 months, ask if you can distribute some material and just have five minutes during a meeting.



Board or committee members from public or private organizations devoted to economic development should be among those most interested in your AEPIII results. Most communities also have some type of economic development organization. The organization may be funded by city government, part of the Chamber, or a separate nonprofit organization. Ask to make a presentation to this group as soon after your announcement as possible. If the economic development department is within your community's government, ask for a list of committee members. In some cases, this and other useful information may be available on the department's or local government's website.



Many people in the business community work with facts and figures rather than abstracts. Your AEPIII results present an opportunity to speak to them about the arts with statistics and facts. Communicating the value of the arts in terms of economic impact also provides common ground for the business community, public officials, and others less comfortable with talking about the arts' intrinsic value. People from the business community are also more likely than others to ask about methodology and other factors involved in the research. They may also be interested in how your city compares to other communities of a similar size. This is part of the information you'll receive in the materials sent to you by Americans for the Arts.

After you determine your most important business organizations, consider smaller groups and associations that are affected by the economic impact of the arts.

Meet with the chair of your local hotel/motel association. Tell them about AEPIII. Talk about those who are coming from outside the area. Show them that people are traveling for the arts. Engage them in stimulating a cultural tourism initiative.



Work with your restaurants, coffee shops, and bars, especially in areas with arts venues. As part of the economic impact announcement, see if they will offer a discount on food and drinks with a ticket stub following a performance (try approaching them around the time of your announcement).



Often, the best way to gather business community leadership is over breakfast. Host a breakfast to speak with them, hear their suggestions and ask questions. Engage them and bring them into the arts loop. Ask them to help you spread the word that the arts are a major employer and a major contributor to the economic growth of your city, state, and region.

In many communities, certain groups hold getting-to-know-you events. These mixers, receptions, or cocktail parties are most often aimed at a particular demographic. If you have an appropriate venue, offer to host an after-hours event. Better yet, get one of your board members to sponsor a mixer for the business community.



Remember: the more the merrier. Make a conscious effort to bring people into the tent.

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## **THE GENERAL PUBLIC**



People want to be proud of their community and feel a sense of connection. We bond with others who share our beliefs and form social organizations (e.g., sororities and fraternities), business organizations, ethnic organizations (e.g., 100 Black Men, 100 Black Women, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce), etc. Ask to speak to these organizations and enlist their aid in spreading the word about your results.



Consider the ways that people express pride in a community sports team; even people who aren't sports fans feel a sense of pride when the local team wins. The numbers tell the story that the arts have a strong and very positive economic impact on your community. Everyone can cheer about the news of your community's vitality, just like sports team. It will be one more reason to feel pride in their community. The numbers are clear and specific. It's not important whether or not everyone understands the complex process of determining these numbers.

### **Working with the General Public**

This toolkit is designed to help you find ways to share your good news about the arts and their economic impact with your community. Most of the suggestions in this toolkit are ultimately designed to reach the general public—whether through the media, special events, word of mouth, elected officials, the business community, or public announcements.

We have found that there are three important rules for communicating with the general public:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Include everyone.
3. Make it easy to understand.



People want to feel as though they have learned something but they may not have time to struggle over the details. As a general rule, most people want the big picture, and they want it in a way that is short, sweet, and easy to digest. Making your information fun and relevant will make it easier to remember and more likely to be shared and discussed.



Develop “elevator statements,” brief statements that you can make in a short elevator ride. In the age of IM’s and Blackberries, people want short answers, a brief picture, a snapshot.

Give your information context. It’s usually helpful to relate your statistics to something popular in your area. Talk about the arts as an industry and compare your statistics other industries in your community (e.g., food, sports, or education). You can also use attendance figures for other events.



Give people information they can absorb quickly and easily. If you say that the arts employ 623,721 people in your community, that’s an impressive number, but it’s everyone has lots of numbers (their security code, voice mail number, passwords, etc.). It’s more meaningful if you tell them that the nonprofit arts are the 14th largest employer in your community, just ahead of hospitals. Don’t let your statistics get lost in a maze of numbers. Find ways to make them real.



The data you receive from Americans for the Arts will examine both the direct and the indirect impact of the arts. These distinctions might be to understand if they’re illustrated with a story:

Let’s say that the nonprofit XYZ Theatre Company is producing a new play. It pays rent, utilities, salaries to its employees, and taxes to the local, state and federal government. It purchases fabric, paint, nails, and lumber for the costumes and the set. It pays to print tickets, programs, and marketing materials. It rents several pieces of furniture for the performances. It buys office supplies. It may also be paying contract fees for the director, the actors, and the designers. If some of the actors have come from out of town, it may be paying for an apartment or a hotel room.

This is direct economic impact.

## **Speakers Bureau**



A speaker’s bureau—comprised of you, members of your board and committees, prominent business representatives, and others—can be the secret to not getting overwhelmed. Develop a speaker’s bureau in advance of your announcement and book speaking engagements for the first week after your announcement.

Other engagements will develop later as more people hear about your new and exciting information.

Decide what angle of the AEPIII story you want to promote to each type of organization or group, and script the message accordingly. Americans for the Arts will provide you with a Power Point presentation, beginning with the national statistics and customizable with your own local information. This will be colorful and visual presentation.

Spend some time reviewing the material. You may need to reassure your speaker's bureau that they don't need to be professional economists - we've already done that work and have put the results into language clear enough for anyone to understand.

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## **IDEAS, GOOD IDEAS, AND OTHER IDEAS**



In order to be noticed above all the other information we're all constantly inundated with, you must find ways jump out from the pack. Actions that you can begin to take immediately to prepare you for the publication of the AEPIII report and your announcement include, meeting with your elected officials, meeting with members of the media, and meeting with representatives from the business community.

### **Your Team**

To help you prepare, you may want to establish a team. Whether you call it an advisory committee, a task force, or your special friends, putting together a group to help you make suggestions, give you guidance, help you avoid mistakes, introduce you to others, etc. can be an enormous advantage.



Some members of your advisory committee may be involved with your organization, others you may not know yet. You will probably want to use a combination of board members and non-board members. You will also want to include people well connected to the business community. All members should be people who already support the arts in your community, even if they haven't directly supported your organization. If you have universities or colleges in your area, you might also want to approach someone who specializes in economics.

It will be helpful to have one or two elected officials on your advisory committee. Sometimes local officials are overwhelmed with their current schedule and are hesitant to make join another committee. However, it might help to explain that this is a limited time commitment. In other words, you need their advice, but you won't waste their time.



Invite someone from each political party if only one elected official on your team would be politically damaging. If you're in a large community, you might want to contact the political party leadership to ask if they would appoint someone. Be sure to inform your elected officials of the others you're inviting to your advisory team.

If you can't find an elected official for your team, try to find one that can be a team advisor. It doesn't matter if they are an incumbent or a former official, as long as they have the experience and understand the process.



It will also be helpful to have a member of the media on your advisory committee. You don't need a big name news anchor or the publisher of the newspaper, but you do need someone with experience who can be available to you.



You can meet with your team regularly or call on them individually as you need them. Most importantly, keep them in the loop and include them in everything. Some of them may be very busy individuals, so you may need to assuage their guilt about not having time to attend lots of meetings. Remind them the team is designed as a limited time commitment and they are members for their expertise and advice.

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## Your Announcement

Our former AEP Partners have stressed the importance and the effectiveness of making an official, public announcement. Your announcement might take the form of a press conference, a luncheon, or another type of special event. It is a unique opportunity to announce good news in the arts and culture community: an announcement bigger than any one entity or person.



All Partners are encouraged to make their announcements on **June 6, 2007**. There are several advantages to making your announcement on this date:

Americans for the Arts will release the national statistics on the economic impact of the arts (AEP III) in late May. As you know, this information is based on the cumulative statistics from your community and from the other state, regional, and community partners around the country. This announcement will garner national media attention.

The annual convention of Americans for the Arts will be held **June 1–3**. As in the past, the convention is expected to generate a great deal of attention from the national media. Several influential leaders from across the county will speak and much of the focus will be on the new economic figures on the arts.





Note: Please plan to join us at the convention. This will be an opportunity for you to meet and exchange ideas with the other AEPIII Partners. We have also planned a special training session on **May 31** for all of our AEPIII Partners, with a presentation about the study, advocacy tips, and a detailed media training session.



The coverage effects of the AEPIII will significantly multiplied with more than 100 AEPIII Partners making positive arts announcements all around the nation on June 6. However, if you need to make your announcement after June 6, that's fine. We understand that every community has a unique situation. It's most important for you to do what works best for your community. Please let us know your announcement date as soon as possibly so we can share the information with others.

Find a location large enough to invite the maximum number of people and invite leaders from your arts and culture organizations, business community, and all appropriate elected officials. This is your chance to blow your horn, so be generous with whom you share your news.

Your goals with the announcement are:

- to produce a big bang;
- to get the maximum media attention;
- to build a buzz; and
- to include and involve as many people as possible.



Talk to your major media outlets in advance about your announcement. Email them a reminder 24 to 36 hours in advance. Remember that the day, the time, and the location of your announcement will affect your media coverage.



Consider developing a theme as part of your announcement (see [More Ideas](#) below).

Have all of your graphics and printed material ready for your announcement.

Provide the media with quotes from your board chair and others in the community. You will receive a quote from Robert Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, in your materials. In addition, you will also receive the names of Partners around the country that have participated in our previous two economic impact studies and are willing to be listed as sources for additional quotes.

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## **What to Say and Where to Say It**

Hold a conference or a workshop on the arts, the economy, and the community. This could be a three-hour event or a two-day event. In addition to examining your information from AEPIII, you might also include such speakers as:



- elected officials, such as the mayor, city council members, etc
- a business leader
- an economist (perhaps from a local college) or someone involved in a local economic development agency

You might also address cultural tourism or tourism and the arts. In addition to an examination of your information from AEPIII, speakers might include:



- elected officials
- a state or local tourism representative
- a representative from the hotel association (perhaps one of the hotels would offer you meeting space for the event)
- a staff member from the convention and visitors association

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## **REPRODUCTION, PRINTING, AND PUBLICATIONS**

One of the primary reasons we send the embargoed information to all of our Partners several weeks in advance of the June 6 release date is so you have a chance to work with your report and reproduce the appropriate information for distribution at your announcement.



In making decisions about what to reproduce and distribute, you should prioritize groups of people that you most want to reach, and then decide the best methods to reach them. Try asking:

Who is your audience?

What new audiences do you want to engage with this information?

How do they best receive information—newspaper, radio, television, email, other?

What format do you want to use—a slick piece with charts, a one-page fact sheet, or something else?

You may want several different pieces. One option is to print a limited number of color brochures for key meetings and a much larger quantity of the same brochures in a less expensive format to distribute at larger presentations. Another option would be to print a one-page fact sheet that could be reproduced



on your copier. You could develop different versions of the one-page fact sheet for use with different audiences.



Remember to post the information on your website within 24 hours of your announcement.



If you already have a database of email addresses, you are ahead of the game. If you don't, email your press release immediately after your announcement to your board members and volunteers. Ask that they forward the message to their email address books.

A one-page fact sheet will serve many needs. The [St. Louis Regional Arts Commission](#) produced a fact sheet on their regular stationary with the following facts about their city:

\$714 million  
the total annual economic impact of the arts

12.6 million  
the total annual attendance for the arts

4.4 million  
the annual arts attendance from outside the region

4,400  
the number of full and part-time employees in the arts

\$244 million  
the total annual revenues for the arts

The commission also listed that St. Louis placed the highest in arts snack spending. Everyone loves a fun fact.

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## **MORE IDEAS**

The following ideas have come from a many different people. Some are adaptations used in communities by Partners in previous economic impact studies. Others have occurred to various staff members while brainstorming about ways to promote the exciting results of this report. Adapt these ideas to your community, consider them as stimulation for your own brainstorming, or use them as they are:



### **The Arts...Part of the Fabric of our Community**



Buy large quantities of yarn, and take it to a school knitting program, local senior center, community center, assisted living facility, or church with a strong program for seniors. Ask the folks who can do so to help you out by knitting as many small, square pieces as they can (3 x 3 inches or so).

Distribute each of these small knitted pieces with your fact sheets and brochures.

Make a presentation along with your thanks to the folks at the senior center, community center, assisted living facility, etc. Invite them to your announcement.

If there are any fabric mills in your area, they might donate the yard. Yarn shops will also sometimes donate discontinued yarn.

With this project, you'll bring attention to your presentations with your handmade squares. You involve seniors, students, as well as yarn shops or fabric mills and you'll have spread your news further into the community.

### **The Arts...Part of the Pride**



Find out what people are most proud of in your community. Ask a local newspaper or radio station to sponsor a contest to collect ideas about community pride. Your community might value a sports team, a school, a new public building, low unemployment rates or high safety rates. There might be a building that was recently saved from the wrecking ball or a neighborhood that rallied around and solved an issue.

Find ways to promote community pride in the weeks leading up to your announcement. When you make your announcement, tie the good news about the economic impact of the arts to community pride. The media will hopefully include the topics that your community is most proud of with the new arts statistics.

Also, consider ways that the sports community (school, college, and professional sports) helps build pride and borrow some of their ideas. Maybe you want to have cheerleaders for the arts. Maybe you want to distribute pom-poms with a slogan such as "The Arts...Part of the Pride." Perhaps you want buttons that say, "The Arts...Proud to be Part of the Community." This will involve the sports community, perhaps several schools or colleges, and many others.

Bringing attention to the good things in a city will help your organization and the arts to be seen as significant participants in building a positive image for the community.

## Guess How Many



Did you ever try to guess the number of pennies or jelly beans in a jar?



Promote a “guess how many” contest and announce the winner with your AEPIII announcement. If possible, relate the number of beans to the number of people involved in your arts community, the amount of taxes that the arts generate, the economic impact of your arts audiences, etc.

You might find a group to coordinate your guessing game. This might be a group that does education projects (this would be a great way to promote elementary math and counting skills). You might also ask the PTAs to be involved.

You might ask retail organizations to hold a contest in their stores during a two-week period (guess how many belts in our store, guess how many buttons in our jar, guess how many shoes in our stockroom, guess how many feet of pencil lead we have on our shelves, etc).

Perhaps there is a candy store that would put together and distribute jars of jelly beans around the city. They would receive recognition on each jar and also a sponsor of your announcement event.

If you have an elected official that is a very good sport, perhaps they will play “guess your weight” with an unveiling of the figure at your announcement.

During your announcement, you might want to draw your all of your new economic impact facts out of a big jar.



Involve contest winners and retail sponsors in your announcement.

A “guess how many” contest involves young people, schools, teachers, retail organizations, and many others. It’s also fun and balances a sense of playfulness with the seriousness of economic impact issues.

## The Arts...An Engine of Economic Development

Consider ways to get involved with engines.



Ask a local automobile dealership to host your announcement event in their dealership showroom. Some of these showrooms are beautiful spaces and tend to be large, open, and unique. Make a connection between the arts as an economic engine in your community and the car dealership. This will get people into the dealership showroom that might not otherwise be there.

Find ways to include and salute the mechanics that make the engines work. Is there an automobile plant somewhere in your area that builds cars, SUVs, trucks, motors, or small parts for those engines? Mechanics that repair engines may have a great deal in common with the backstage technicians of your arts organizations. Many volunteer backstage technicians may be mechanics or engineers. Find ways to bring these two groups together and help you spread the word about the arts.

Is there an antique car organization in your community? Is there a group that rebuilds “muscle cars”? Maybe there is a collector of train memorabilia in your community who would let people look at his collection while you talked about the arts. You could also use a train station, a train car or a hobby shop that sells miniature trains.

Consider printing the invitations to your announcement on the photograph of an engine, a car, a train, etc.

Connecting the arts with engines targets specific industries in your community. The unusual nature of this partnership will be intriguing to the media. It may also help the community focus on the arts as an industry.

### **The Arts Are at the Table**



Consider working with your largest furniture dealer. Perhaps they could have tent cards made for their showroom display tables for two-weeks. Or they could give self-identified arts patrons a five percent discount for two weeks. Perhaps you could also use their showroom for your announcement event.

Think about ways that you and the furniture dealer can promote each other. You could send notices to your patrons about the discount at their furniture store. You could ask them to use the phrase “The Arts Are at the Table” in the ads that they place over a three-week period just before and after your announcement.

You might approach an individual restaurant or your local restaurant association. Ask if they will display tent cards on their tables in support of your new economic information.

The visual design for this tent card might have arts icons or caricatures of the arts sitting in chairs around a table. The table itself might be a map of your community, region, or state.

Perhaps the invitations to your announcement event could be printed to look like tablecloths. Maybe you could involve the local high school shop classes and home economics classes.

With this theme, you can involve the business community and encourage a partnership among the arts and certain businesses that might not otherwise be included. The media will also be interested in your clever presentation.

### **The Arts...Fanning the Economic Flame**



Since you'll be making your announcement in June, the weather is perfect for fans.



Work with your hardware stores. Ask if you can print and tie a note around their fans. Get a group of volunteers and arrive at the hardware stores 30 minutes before they open. You can have your information tied around all the fans in no time.

If you want to do this before the announcement, your sign might say "The Arts are Fanning the Economic Flames." If you want to wait until after the announcement, print several different versions of the card with different economic facts you're your community report.

You could also have hand-held paper fans printed with the same message. Individual fans are inexpensive and you can find a printing company online. If you have trouble finding a printing company, your local or state fair will have information for you (they are currently among the largest users of paper fans). Print your message plus one great economic fact on your fans. You can also give the fans to your announcement event attendees. Make sure to get lots of folks fanning.

### **It's About the Arts, It's About Economic Impact, and It All Adds Up**

This is a more complex slogan but it can also be adapted and used in many ways.



"The Arts...It All Adds Up" might be broken down into several different pieces that reinforce each other. See the options we came up with for community business segments:



Coffee Shops  
Biscotti and Beethoven...It All Adds Up

Coffee and Cezanne...It All Adds Up

Pastries and Pointillism... It All Adds Up

These would be good ways to reinforce the economic impact of arts audiences and the impact that these audiences have with their pre- and post-show refreshments.

Same Idea, but with alcohol  
Beer and Ballet... It All Adds Up

Perhaps coffee shops and bars would display tent cards giving information from AEPIII. Maybe they would offer a modest discount or a two-for-one if an arts patron brings in an admission ticket.

Shopping Center or a Particular Chain of Shops  
Shopping and Shakespeare... It All Adds Up

In the weeks following your announcement, they could slip flyers that focus on the economic impact of arts into their customers' bags.

Hotels  
Hotels and Handel... It All Adds Up

Banks  
Money and Mozart... It All Adds Up

Both the hotels and the banks could focus on the importance of the arts in the overall economy of the community.

Other Industries  
Baseball and Brahms... It All Adds Up

Dessert and Design... It All Adds Up

Housing and Handel...It All Adds Up (real estate)

Tourism and Tap...It all adds up (convention and visitors bureau)

Personalized Slogans for Specific Businesses  
Quizno's and Quartets... It All Adds Up

Subway and Serenades... It All Adds Up

If you have a funder who is willing to pay for a billboard or two, you could use a formula format. For example:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{It's about Economic Impact} \\ + \quad \text{It's About the Arts} \\ \hline \text{It All Adds Up} \end{array}$$

Remember not to use the names of artists or 'arts words' that are obscure.

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## OTHER IDEAS



Develop a series of tent cards with one economic impact fact printed on one side and leave the other side of the tent cards blank. Take the cards to restaurants, hotels, retail businesses, etc., and ask them to print their own messages and logos on the blank side.



Work with your advisory committee to choose four different industries to focus on every two weeks. Ask them to help you promote the results of your study.

Ask parking garages if you can put fact sheets about the economic impact of the arts on the windshields of their cars. Target garages near arts venues. Enlist high school service organizations, music or drama clubs, etc. to pass out the flyers. Thank the students by giving them passes to arts events or exhibitions.

Ask several volunteers to form a marquee committee. Divide the city up into sections and ask culture organizations and movie theaters to put your slogan on their marquee.

Billboards can be expensive and many of them are already rented 12 months out. You might try to find a sponsor to donate their space for a couple of weeks. You could also talk to the billboard company about letting you use some of their less popular spaces. With billboards, keep your message short and simple and use the space to reinforce your slogan or ask a question.

Did you know that the arts in our community have an annual economic impact of...?

Involve others: can you get students, seniors, or other groups help you spread the word?

You might want to look for information and ideas on the websites of the following Partners who participated in AEP11:

The [Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture](#) built a campaign around “The Arts...Vital and Valuable.”

The [Boise City Arts Commission](#) has lots of great ideas.

[The Greater Hartford Arts Council](#) used “The Big Bang of Arts in Hartford.”

The [St. Louis Regional Arts Commission](#) combined a business approach to the arts and a series of fun facts

You could make buttons that say “The Arts Contribute to the Economy of [*your city*].” Send buttons to board chairs of all local arts organizations. If you have the budget, buy enough buttons to distribute to the arts organizations in large quantities to thank audience members, board members, staff and volunteers. It will also help spread the word.

Other ideas for themes and slogans include:

The arts make our city more fun, more creative, and stronger economically.

The Arts...the Big Reveal

The ABCs of the Arts (Arts. Better, creative, development. Economic driver...)

The Arts Mean Business

The Arts Are BIG Business

The Arts...Partners in the Economy (For a visual, consider photographs of famous partners, e.g., Fred and Ginger, Mutt and Jeff, etc.)

The Arts Sing, Dance, and Build our Economy



Art Matters

The Arts...Creative Catalyst and Economic Engine

Culture and Cash...Arts and Economic Impact

The Arts...Vital and Valuable

The Arts are a Winning Hand (Print invitations and facts on a deck of cards.)



One community created a slide show of facts related to the economic impact of the arts and got local movie houses to show them during the movie previews.

In some communities, the local utility company includes inserts with their billing invoices. These inserts usually focus on energy-saving ideas related to the utilities, but they might allow you one month to promote the economic impact of the arts in your community.

Ask your community arts organizations if they will insert an open letter in their programs. The letter could be a thank you to audience members and a reminder of the economic impact of the arts. It should not be a request for money, ticket sales, or advocacy letters to elected officials. It should emphasize the importance of their role in the arts and in the economic impact of the arts in their community.



Set up a video camera in the lobby of an arts organization. Ask patrons to read one fact from the AEPiII study into the camera. Play the video in a continuous loop in the lobby before and after the performances. This should be real community members talking about the effects of the arts on their community.



Produce an obviously fake stock certificate for the arts. Send it to elected officials, audience members, volunteers, etc. It might say, "You have invested in making our community stronger through the arts." This will serve as a reminder that they are a key part of the good news and a thank you for their participation.

Develop a series of note cards, blank on the inside but with one fact taken from AEPiII on the front. Give to your board, staff, and volunteers, and ask them to send notes to their friends. Give some to local arts organizations and ask them to write their elected officials.



And speaking of note cards ...remember to thank ever