

Cultural Planning

A Guide for New Mexico Communities



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Introduction to Cultural Planning

Cultural planning is an engaging and rigorous process that connects arts and cultural resources to critical community development goals, and leads the way to developing creative and vital communities. Creative placemaking, creative economies, and development of a creative workforce are prominent agenda items at national conferences for civic leaders, economic development summits and arts conferences.

Now is the time to use this well-earned recognition to advance arts and cultural development to the advantage of New Mexico's communities. Communities that support and provide arts and cultural programs and events, cultural facilities, cultural entrepreneurs, and resources for arts education should consider the value and benefits of cultural planning.

For expanded information concerning the impact of arts and culture on New Mexico's economy and quality of life, refer to the following two appendices at the end of this guide: *The Economic Impact of New Mexico's Non-profit Arts Sector*, *The Benefits of Creating an Effective Cultural Plan*.

An effective cultural plan provides powerful strategies for improving the livability of our communities. Not only does it address the needs of, and opportunities for artists, cultural institutions and community citizens; it easily integrates into relevant aspects of city planning, historic preservation, cultural tourism development, urban design and downtown revitalization.

Ideally, a community cultural plan is endorsed and adopted by local government, and is led by a steering committee of local stakeholders in the creative community that oversees and conducts the planning process. The goal of the committee is to facilitate broad-based community participation to develop a cultural plan that is relevant, meaningful and realistic.

How to Use this Guide

This guide is presented from the perspective of a community organization such as a local arts council or MainStreet program, working in partnership with local government. The purpose of this guide is to provide communities insight into the process of creating a cultural plan; and encourage community and business leaders, cultural workers and local government to explore the benefits of cultural planning. It explains why and how an effective cultural plan can integrate seamlessly into your community's economic and community development strategies, and why it is vital for the community's quality of life.

Use this guide with the intent to adapt it to your community's cultural profile, current economic circumstances and capacity for implementation. Be flexible with the information provided in this guide by adopting strategies that are relevant to your own community.

If local government representatives and other community leaders need additional information and insight into arts and cultural development, see the appendix at the end of this guide titled: *The Benefits of Cultural Planning*. It presents a credible case for cultural planning and cultural development.

Specific steps in cultural planning are recommended in this guide; however the steering committee may not need to follow each step as described, or may choose to adopt other strategies along the way. The important point is to be organized in the planning process.

Existing Conditions that Enable Cultural Planning

A certain amount of arts and cultural amenities must exist within the community to enable the development of a comprehensive cultural plan, and the number of arts and cultural assets will determine the intensity of the planning process.

- Community citizens possess a strong sense of place. They value their community's history, heritage and diverse cultural traditions.
- Citizens value and appreciate the informal arts that occur as part of everyday life within the community: artists' guilds, cultural celebrations, the sharing of traditional foods and customs, and an appreciation for traditional craftsmanship.
- Certain activities significantly increase the level and depth of arts and cultural development such as: art, music and theatre educators, training opportunities for cultural workers and artists, arts learning opportunities for youth and adults in community settings, and advocacy for arts and cultural development.
- The presence of artists, arts spaces, and cultural institutions.
- The presence of diverse cultural amenities and income generating cultural activities.
- Industry segments of the community that support the local economy: restaurants cafés and pubs, coffee houses and internet cafés, hotels and bed and breakfasts, and locally owned creative retail establishments.
- Community and civic leaders that are committed to economic growth and an increased quality of life.
- Community capacity for cooperation and advancement.
- Commitment to neighborhood and downtown improvement.

Types of Cultural Plans

The number of arts and cultural programs and events, cultural facilities, administrative capacity, funding and volunteer resources will determine the content and intensity of the cultural plan. For example, larger communities with numerous cultural amenities and resources may tend to develop a more comprehensive cultural plan, or focus their plan on creating an arts and cultural district. Small communities may choose to conduct an

arts and cultural assessment or explore the feasibility of establishing a local arts council or community arts center. There are several types of cultural plans:

Comprehensive Cultural Plan

Comprehensive cultural plans are developed to become a specific component of the local or regional government's comprehensive plan. These plans involve extensive cooperation among arts and cultural organizations, non-governmental cultural facilities, cultural entrepreneurs, local government, social services, educators, city planners, civic design specialists, historic preservation, and tourism and economic development.

Arts and Cultural District Plan

Arts and Cultural District Plans are conducted with the intensity of a comprehensive cultural plan with nearly the same types of partners. They differ in that they focus on goals to revitalize or develop within an adopted physical boundary, a designated downtown area or neighborhood, or a post-industrial area of a community.

Single-Focus Cultural Plan

This type of plan focuses on a single area of cultural development; for example: a plan that identifies goals and strategies to advance arts education in schools and communities, or that initiates an alliance of cultural institutions and artists to advocate for arts and cultural development within the community.

A Community or Regional Arts and Cultural Assessment

Communities with a limited amount of resources are more likely to conduct an arts and cultural assessment; a process for identifying arts and cultural assets, needs, and opportunities. An arts and cultural assessment is a less intensive process that requires little or no funding. The process of conducting an arts and cultural assessment helps build capacity for more expansive cultural planning.

Research-Based Cultural Assessment

This type of assessment focuses on a specific outcome based on research, for example: a feasibility study for funding a community arts center, determining the economic impact of the arts and culture sector in the community, or conducting research on effective strategies for marketing and promotions.

Elements of a Successful Cultural Plan

A successful cultural plan communicates a clear and meaningful mission, involves cooperative and committed partners, provides opportunities for broad-based community input, and recommends strategies that will contribute to the vitality of the community.

- Community involvement and collaboration that includes a broad-based representation of the community and its cultural sectors, neighborhood citizens, elected officials and other community leaders.
- The cultural plan has local government support and endorsement.

- Cultural planners understand and articulate how arts and culture contributes to community growth and advancement.
- The cultural plan clearly communicates purpose, vision and goals.
- There is broad-based community involvement in the planning process.
- There are numerous opportunities for community citizens to share their ideas, opinions and concerns.
- Outreach methods are used to reach a broad-based constituency such as: social media and websites, local newspapers, roundtables, listening sessions, surveys, and networking with various community service organizations.
- Sensitive and engaging facilitators are appointed to conduct public input sessions.
- Public sessions are held in accessible and appealing locations.
- Adequate time and resources are devoted to developing the cultural plan.
- Goals and strategies of the cultural plan are achievable and within the capacity of the community to implement: administrative capacity, social networks,+ and human and financial resources.
- Cultural planners set a positive example that fosters a cooperative spirit among stakeholders and community partners.
- Communities with limited resources create a cultural plan that builds on existing assets and develops dynamic partnerships.
- The lead agency has the capacity and commitment to oversee the planning process.
- Community citizens and planning partners are kept well informed on the progress of the cultural plan.
- The plan focuses on how arts and cultural resources will be mobilized to help a community achieve civic goals.
- There is an emphasis on identity, creative placemaking, community pride and cultural heritage.

Encountering and Addressing Challenges

Community Challenges and Conflict

Overreacting to challenges and conflicts impedes planning and threatens to stall the process. Be prepared to acknowledge challenges that are brought up during community sessions, but avoid trying to solve challenges during meetings. Record challenges during the meeting and then include how they might be addressed by the strategies recommended in the cultural plan.

Sometimes community conflict involves contentious personalities that cannot move beyond a particular issue. Rather than engage in the conflict by expressing an opinion or taking a position, defuse it by maintaining an objective profile and move the conversation in a more positive direction. Conflict resolution is better left to experienced practitioners. If conflict is a result of social inequity, acknowledge the concern that is brought up during the meeting and record the issue as a challenge to be addressed in

the cultural plan, then communicate the issue to the appropriate community organization that can help resolve the conflict.

Lack of Understanding

Be prepared to address resistance by communicating the benefits of cultural planning and ensuring all segments of the community will have input. Prepare, and have on hand a one-page information document about the purpose and benefits of cultural planning. Create a cultural plan blog for the purpose of promoting the plan, to announce community meetings, report on progress and highlight community involvement.

Regulatory Policies

Partner with city and county governments to help ensure that zoning and code issues are amenable to cultural development strategies, historic preservation goals, and civic design efforts.

Gentrification

Recommendations for avoiding displacement and gentrification should be addressed in the cultural plan including strategies for maintaining affordable housing, affordable live-work space for artists, and initiatives for small business development, especially in improvement districts of the community.

Avoid Developing an Overambitious Plan

Avoid developing a multi-layered plan of long-range dreams and best-case scenarios. An overambitious plan will be burdensome to the community and is less likely to be implemented. Develop the plan favoring realistic, achievable goals that will benefit the community.

Steps for Developing the Cultural Plan

Disregarding a structure for the planning process will result in a lack of focus and will undermine the effectiveness of the plan. Find a way to develop the plan that takes into account available community resources: time, energy, funding, manpower and administrative capacity. Before initiating the planning process, map out sequential steps for creating the plan.

The steps that are recommended in this guide are for developing a comprehensive cultural plan or an arts and cultural district plan.

Step 1: Preparation

Community Readiness

The cultural plan will be initiated by a cultural plan steering committee that will work to gain community support and the endorsement of local government.

- Determine what will be achieved by developing a cultural plan.

- Be prepared to justify to community leaders the need for, and the benefits of cultural planning.
- Secure the endorsement and support of local government.
- Determine if there is community support for cultural planning.
- Convene cultural leaders, arts organizations and artists to discuss the feasibility of conducting a cultural plan and who will assist.
- Identify sources for research and planning expertise.
- Identify funding sources that will cover the cost of planning.
- Establish a lead agency to serve as administrative and fiscal agent for the planning process.
- Identify diverse community partners with the capacity to help conduct and implement the cultural plan.
- Determine if your community has the capacity to implement a cultural plan.

Identify a Lead Organization

Identify an organization such as a local arts council or a MainStreet program to serve as the administrative and fiscal agent and oversee the cultural planning process.

Develop an Effective and Committed Steering Committee

Avoid assigning people to the committee that are merely figure-head representatives or do not intend to work. The steering committee must have the capacity to oversee the planning process and be committed to arts and cultural development in their community. From the start, ensure that anyone who serves on the steering committee is willing to commit to the rigorous work of developing the cultural plan, can provide access to various sectors of the community, and has the expertise to assume certain responsibilities and tasks to carry out the planning process. Steering committee members must be willing to:

- Make time to actively work on the cultural plan.
- Share resources and ideas.
- Serve as advocates for arts and cultural development.
- Attend steering committee meetings.
- Keep commitments and honor deadlines.
- Model a positive attitude and encourage cooperation among stakeholders and community organizations.

Strive to develop a steering committee with a variety of skills needed to facilitate the cultural planning process.

- Recruit members who understand arts and cultural programming and cultural development, and community organizers with experience in economic and community development, civic design, historic preservation, tourism development, and community services.
- Identify members who will arrange access to various sectors of the community.

- Recruit experienced public meeting facilitators who will volunteer to conduct the public access component of the planning process.
- Identify members who will help work with local media, create a cultural planning blog and other methods for promoting the cultural plan.

Steering committee members should understand what is expected of them. Provide each member with a packet containing:

- The purpose of, and approximate timeline for the cultural plan.
- The role and responsibilities of the steering committee.
- Tasks involved in conducting the cultural plan.

The Valuable Role of Task Forces

Temporary task forces can conduct specific components of the cultural plan that the steering committee does not have the capacity to undertake. For example, a task force may include studies on economic impact of the arts and cultural sector in the community, an arts and cultural inventory, or an assessment of arts learning opportunities.

Determine if Your Committee Needs to Hire a Cultural Planning Consultant

Decide whether a consultant is needed and if so, for which part of the planning process. Determine costs involved and if there are funds to cover the consultant's fee. Then initiate a request for proposals and negotiate a contract with the consultant. Refer to the chapter in this guide titled: *The Role of Consultants*.

Determine How the Cultural Plan will be Funded

Develop a budget for conducting the plan including but not limited to: expenses associated with research, fees for facilitators and/or consultants, supplies and meeting refreshments, internet service, administrative expenses. Then, determine how the cultural plan will be paid for: grants from federal, state, local agencies, community foundations, donations.

Identify Community Partners: The Key to Community Access and Support

Effective cultural planning depends on diverse partnerships to provide access to various sectors of the community and help ensure broad-based community support. Public agencies, arts and cultural organizations, artists' associations and coalitions, the business sector, social and youth services, educators, the faith-based community, and citizens groups are all potential partners.

Assign Duties

Assign duties that match the skills of the committee members, volunteers, and staff that will be working on the plan. Example: A member of your committee has had extensive experience facilitating public meetings. That person is the appropriate choice to coordinate public focus groups and listening sessions.

Step 2: Assessment and Community Participation

Lay the foundation for your cultural plan by identifying data and resources that are already available such as current census reports, school data, civic design projects being conducted, plans for historic preservation, economic and community development studies, social service data and cultural development initiatives.

Next, identify and collect new information that is needed through focus groups, listening sessions, blogs and citizen surveys. When the time comes to put the plan in writing, your committee will have gathered the appropriate data and information to set goals for the cultural plan and determine aspects of the cultural plan that will integrate into existing community priorities.

Gathering Information: The Key to Community Outreach

Announcements are placed in local media and on the cultural plan blog inviting interested members of the public to participate in focus groups or listening sessions. To provide consistency and to ensure key issues are addressed, develop a simple discussion guide for the sessions, starting out with the purpose for the cultural plan and including the topics for discussion.

Hosting community listening sessions and focus groups is the most effective way to gather first-hand the opinions and ideas of stakeholders and the public. The sessions can either focus on a variety of topics or on a specific topic. Small groups are preferable and present a more congenial environment for sharing information. Larger groups can be divided into breakout sessions with time built in for each group to report back.

Arrange for two volunteers to conduct the session: one person to facilitate the discussion and one person to record comments, issues, and ideas on flip charts. Make sure the facilitator is a good listener, can keep the session on track, and will ensure that everyone attending has the opportunity to contribute their ideas and suggestions. Additional facilitators will be needed for larger groups with breakout sessions.

Additional information can be collected by circulating questionnaires or surveys via newspaper, on a cultural plan blog or at various pick up points around the community. If the committee or a task force has conducted an arts and cultural inventory, document the findings.

Summaries of community sessions and input from surveys should include the actual words of the participants, and be saved as a public record by posting on the cultural plan blog. The summaries will later be distilled into goals and strategies of the cultural plan.

Identify Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Analyze the data from survey results to identify significant patterns of data, and make note of the most frequent responses.

Identify trends and common themes from public meeting summaries, interviews, focus groups and surveys, and synthesize the results into key issues and priorities that will be used to create the goals and strategies of the cultural plan.

Step 3: Draft and Refine the Cultural Plan

A cultural plan is most often presented as a set of goals and strategies with specific outcomes. This approach enables the committee or lead agency to more readily implement and evaluate the plan.

A draft of the cultural plan will be written by an appointed writer, by members of the steering committee, or by a planning consultant. The document should be written by someone who has been involved in the planning process and has excellent writing skills.

Create a Draft of the Cultural Plan

Create the draft as if it were the final document. Use language that is clear, concise and informative. Format the document to translate well on both paper and on-line. Include attractive photographs highlighting the community's arts and cultural assets. Areas to be covered in the plan might include:

- An economic, social, and cultural profile of the community.
- A description of the cultural planning process and how planning goals and strategies were identified.
- Assets, opportunities and challenges.
- Goals and implementation strategies.
- Strategies for funding the implementation of the plan.
- Acknowledgements of contributors and participants.

Present the Draft to the Public

The steering committee should review the draft before it goes public. Review the draft for content, appearance and readability. Ask these questions:

- Will our community understand what this plan is communicating?
- Is this plan relevant to our community's economic and community development goals?
- Will this plan inspire support for arts and cultural development?
- Will implementation of this plan be feasible?
- Does the plan highlight cultural assets and offer solutions to challenges?
- Will this document pass the scrutiny of funders?

Community Review

Circulate the cultural plan draft for additional community input. Post it on the lead agency's website and the cultural plan blog, and circulate printed copies at various points throughout the community. Contact local media to announce opportunities for community review.

Give the community one or two months to review the draft for additional suggestions or discussion. Make sure that all community partners, local government representatives and key stakeholders receive a copy of the draft for final review.

Refine the Cultural Plan

Compile and add to the plan any significant information not already included; then, make necessary adjustments before submitting the final cultural plan to the steering committee and local government personnel for endorsement.

Launch the Plan

Partner with local media to host a high-profile launch of the plan and to thank the cultural planning partners and the community for its participation. Provide printed copies of the cultural plan at the launch event and post it on appropriate websites and blogs.

Step 4: Implementing the Cultural Plan

The work involved in implementing a cultural plan presents a strong case for why it is important to develop a plan that is based on realistic goals. Implementation requires leadership, well connected civic and public partnerships, and a collaborative spirit among cultural organizations and community partners. There are several components to implementation.

Outline an Implementation Strategy with a Timeline

The lead agency or organization will oversee implementation in cooperation with key stakeholders and community partners, coordinate staff and/or volunteers, organize funding efforts, and monitor and evaluate progress.

Develop a sequence of tasks that will be conducted to accomplish the goals outlined in the cultural plan, who or which community partners will work on specific components of the plan, and set a timeline.

Set Annual Priorities

Determine short-term and long-term goals. Take into consideration the community's capacity to do the work and funds available for implementation. Avoid setting annual priorities that cannot be paid for. To help build momentum, begin by implementing projects that are simple and have potential for significant impact.

Create a Fund Development Plan

Create a proposed budget and fund development plan to cover costs of implementing the cultural plan. Include who will be writing grants, which components of the plan will be implemented by arts and cultural organizations, what types of activities will generate income, and how the funds will be managed.

Keep the Public Informed

Don't keep your community's citizens in the dark. They participated in the cultural plan, and they deserve to know how it is progressing. A blog is an inexpensive and practical

way to communicate arts and cultural activities that occur as part of the cultural plan, and is an excellent way to hear back from the community. Post the final cultural plan on the blog and report how the goals of the plan are being accomplished.

Maintain consistent communication with local media for keeping the public informed, and invite the public to occasional media events that unveil cultural development projects being conducted as part of the cultural plan.

Step 5: Evaluation

Be prepared to provide an annual report on the cultural plan for funding entities including federal and state agencies, foundations, and community sponsors. Equally important however, an effective evaluation method will help ensure that the community's cultural needs are being met. An annual progress report might include:

- Strategies implemented
- Goals accomplished
- Challenges encountered
- Numbers of community partners and volunteers involved
- Number of people served
- outreach components employed
- Impact on the community's economy and quality of life

A template for an annual progress report is included as an appendix of this document.

Reality Check: Critical Insight into Cultural Planning

- The cultural planning process takes approximately 12 to 18 months.
- Most cultural plans are broad in scope and do not designate specific agencies, personnel or organizations for specific tasks; however implementing the plan depends on a wide-range of community partners.
- Most plans do not project the cost of implementation. Depending on the complexity of the plan, this could present a challenge to the community. The more ambitious the plan is, the more it will cost to implement it.
- Concern for cultural equity and increased arts access are common themes in most cultural plans.
- Be prepared for resistance if there has been unfulfilled expectations caused by community plans that have not been implemented.
- A cultural plan is more likely to be successfully implemented if there is a spirit of cooperation among civic institutions and community organizations.
- Implementing a cultural plan is administrative intensive.

The Role of Consultants

Consultants can provide expertise with roles that may include research, data compilation, project management, media relations, writing the plan and follow-up evaluation activities. Some communities enlist consultants at critical points such as preplanning, assessment analysis, or goal setting; then manage the remaining tasks with local staff, volunteers and advisers. If consultants are entrusted with writing the plan, the steering committee must ensure that the plan addresses community needs and is feasible to implement.

If the steering committee has decided that a consultant will be contracted, a request for proposals can be sent out along with a description of the project and explicit details of the scope of work involved. Or, the committee may choose to contract a consultant from a recommended resource list. Contact references and get their frank assessment of the consultant's work.

A formal contract protects both parties from the common complaints of cost overruns and missed deadlines and should include: a work plan, the consultant's fee, how expenses will be reimbursed, how the invoice will be submitted, workplace environment, contract dates, and a termination clause.

Appendices

The Benefits of Creating an Effective Cultural Plan

Any community with a critical mass of artists, cultural institutions and facilities, arts programs and events, and arts education opportunities, are well positioned to conduct a cultural plan. It is however, necessary for the organization conducting the cultural plan to communicate why and how cultural development will benefit the community.

Arts and Cultural Development Enables Economic Growth

Research indicates that arts active communities provide the amenities and lifestyle that attracts creative businesses and entrepreneurs, a skilled workforce, and young families. In addition, businesses are increasingly selecting locations based on amenities rather than tax incentives. A high standard of living ranked second just below salary in surveys related to job appeal for technology workers, therefore increasing the attractiveness of a job by 33%.

- Creative reuse of vacant downtown spaces generates local property and sales tax revenues that can be devoted to improving the community's infrastructure.
- Additional jobs and income are generated in construction, retail businesses and arts and cultural production.
- The presence of artists, arts and cultural organizations and arts-learning opportunities enhances the community's quality of life.
- Arts rich communities provide a foundation for cultural tourism.
- Arts supportive communities increase earned income opportunities for artists, arts and cultural organizations, and commercial arts enterprises.
- Cultural planning helps pave the way for establishing arts and cultural districts, to improve cultural facilities, and contribute to neighborhood and downtown revitalization.
- Arts spaces generate additional pedestrian traffic and contribute to increased retail activity.
- The presence of arts spaces and events attract businesses that generate additional employment such as coffee houses and internet cafés, diverse retail establishments, and restaurants and pubs.
- Artists are valued for their contribution to the community's quality of life, and their earning power improves with increased opportunities to sell works of art, to perform and to teach.

Arts and Culture Improves the Community's Quality of Life

A strong sense place is fostered by increased opportunities for citizens leave the confines of their homes to attend cultural events, dine out, socialize with friends and neighbors, and participate as volunteers.

- Citizens become more discerning of and responsible for their physical environment by recognizing the value of public works of art, local architecture, landscaping and attractive public spaces.
- Downtowns are animated by the presence of arts spaces such as arts learning centers, galleries, community theaters, and artists' live-work spaces.
- Arts and cultural engagement reinforces a sense of belonging.
- Citizens who gain capacity in arts and cultural organizing are more likely to engage in other areas of community development.
- The arts bridge across divides of ethnicity, race, age, and socioeconomic class.
- The arts provide youth the opportunity to make creative lifestyle choices early in life.

Cultural Planning Advances Advocacy Efforts

- Increases opportunities for public and private funding for cultural development.
- Advances cultural growth by placing arts and cultural development on equal footing with economic and community development.
- Advocates support for arts education in schools and community settings.



Dance Classes at the Institute for Spanish Arts, Santa Fe
Photo by: Marisela Angulo

How to Conduct a Basic Arts and Cultural Inventory

Artists and cultural organizations make a significant contribution to a community's economy and quality of life. As a result, arts and culture has become an important component in community planning.

By identifying and documenting arts and cultural assets, the community can focus on resources that enable the development of a cultural plan, explore the potential for cultural tourism, or develop an arts and cultural district. Consider these basic steps for identifying your community's arts and cultural assets.

Start with a committee to plan and conduct the arts and cultural inventory

Convene public sessions with a diverse cross section of community citizens to identify artists, arts educators, cultural organizations, places and events, and other resources that make up the cultural fabric of the community. Consider assigning a facilitator to conduct the session.

Identify the community's arts and cultural assets

Provide numerous opportunities for community citizens to brainstorm and list the community's arts and cultural assets. Place an arts and cultural survey form on a community website, in the local newspaper or at various points throughout the community.

Assign a community benefit that each cultural resource serves

Some resources may offer more than one benefit. Example: The local artists' association hosts a series of exhibits in downtown spaces throughout the year and also provides arts instruction to adults and youth. Community benefits would be 1, 4, and 5 from the list below:

1. Enhances community quality of life
2. Contributes to economic growth
3. Cultural tourism resource
4. Contributes to neighborhood or downtown revitalization
5. Arts education resource

Record, publicize and document results of the cultural inventory

Examples of community arts and cultural resources

- Visual artists, craftsmen, theatre artists, writers, dancers, musicians, film and video artists
- Teachers of music, art/media/design, theatre, dance, creative writing
- Folk and traditional arts: traditional music dance and crafts, traditional foodways, occupational crafts, traditional elders
- Architects and architecture
- Design specialists

- Art museums, galleries and informal exhibition spaces
- Performance spaces
- Local art & humanities councils
- Arts organizations
- **Community theaters**
- Artists' spaces and studios, dance studios
- Folklorists
- Local scholars
- Arts and cultural festivals
- Community orchestras and bands
- Choral societies
- Church musicians and choirs
- Youth and adult arts workshops
- Gathering places for cultural activities: bookstore, coffee house, restaurant, community center, churches, etc.
- Educational institutions
- Libraries
- History museums, historical societies
- Municipal parks
- Arts and music supply shops

NEW MEXICO'S ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICTS PROGRAM

An arts and cultural district is a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area of a community in which a high concentration of cultural facilities or activities serves as the anchor of attraction. That concentration is represented within an approximate ¼ mile “ped-shed.”

No two arts and cultural districts are alike. Each district reflects the community's unique environment, history, land use and cultural demographics. Arts and cultural districts can be found in all types of communities from small and rural, to large and urban. They increase tax revenues, profitability of surrounding businesses, and in some cases property values. Arts and cultural districts are a catalyst for community revitalization and serve as an incentive for new or relocating businesses.

The role arts that cultural districts play in providing a vibrant and appealing environment is a major factor in retaining young citizens and their families, attracting a well-educated and creative workforce, and positioning the community as a cultural tourist destination. Arts and cultural districts bring citizens out from their homes and into a vibrant social space to interact and bond with their families and neighbors; and the community's young talent is showcased and recognized as part of the cultural landscape.

Community arts centers offer opportunities for young people and adults to experience lifelong learning through the arts, and the community's ethnic and cultural diversity contributes to the vitality and global profile of the arts and cultural district. Music and theatre events, artists' studios and galleries, street fairs and festivals, arts spaces and arts classes all contribute to a high standard of living for community residents and an appealing attraction for tourists.

New Mexico's Arts and Cultural District (ACD) Program was adopted in 2007 by the State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Bill Richardson. The program is an inter-agency collaboration between the Economic Development Department, the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Tourism Department. It is directed toward place-based economic development focusing on the unique cultural and arts assets of each authorized district.

Program Objectives

- Promote the exceptional art and history of New Mexico.
- Help develop a community's cultural and artistic facilities by providing resources to artists, artisans, and crafts people in both live and work environments.
- Help communities leverage their assets by clustering existing arts and cultural amenities for the common goal of a dynamic and economically vibrant district.

The state statute established the New Mexico MainStreet Director as the Coordinator of the ACD Program and established the New Mexico Arts Commission, staffed by the Executive Director of the New Mexico Arts Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, as the “authorizing” body for each proposed district.

The State Arts and Cultural District Council made up of representatives from the following agencies and organizations, works with the ACD Coordinator to set policy and develop resources and technical assistance:

- New Mexico MainStreet Program, Economic Development Department
- New Mexico Arts, Department of Cultural Affairs
- New Mexico Tourism Department
- New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Department of Cultural Affairs
- New Mexico Humanities Council
- McCune Charitable Foundation
- Museum Foundation of New Mexico
- Friends of New Mexico MainStreet, Inc.

Incentives

The state statute currently provides the following incentives to help investors and local municipalities conserve, grow and revitalize their ACD's economy.

- Local ACD start up support through an inter-disciplinary resource team, funding for a local ACD Cultural Plan and funding for a local ACD Master Plan.
- An ACD infrastructure fund for capital outlay and grant funds for infrastructure.
- Technical assistance and services from cooperating partners in the state ACD Steering Council.
- Participation in the Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Program.

Link to: New Mexico MainStreet for the following information:

[*Arts and Cultural District Flowchart of Services and Benefits*](#)

[*Arts and Cultural District Toolbox*](#)

Local Requirements

For a community to be considered for authorization as a state ACD, they must make an application to the ACD coordinator for consideration by the New Mexico Arts Commission. New rounds of applications occur about once every two years. New Mexico's ACD Program was created to leverage and partner existing local community economic development organizations with arts and cultural organizations; combining existing assets, skills, finances, services and resources. The program does not intend to develop another local non-profit competing in a fairly limited financial arena of support and limited human resources. In many cases the local ACD Steering Committee is a standing committee of the local MainStreet project.

Application Requirements

- A proposed walkable (¼ mile ped-shed) district that includes historic assets, arts galleries, cultural institutions, cultural amenities, cultural and arts events
- Appropriate lodging and restaurants for cultural and heritage tourists
- Arts and cultural enterprises and institutions open on the weekends
- An ACD Steering Committee composed of official representatives from a local MainStreet Program or a community economic development organization
- A local or regional arts council
- The municipality



Marigold Parade, Albuquerque

Photo by: Claude Stephenson

The Economic Impact of New Mexico's Non-profit Arts Sector

New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs and the state arts agency, is a primary supporter of New Mexico's arts businesses. Each year, we invest both federal and state dollars in the arts and culture economy through performing arts centers, local arts councils, and arts enterprise partnerships. The arts businesses New Mexico Arts supports are part of the state's \$3.3 billion Arts and Cultural Industry employing 59,369 New Mexicans.

New Mexico Arts is one of the top funders in the state, investing \$976,987 in 164 arts businesses in fiscal year 2010. If New Mexico Arts were a private foundation, we would be the 13th largest funder in the state in any concentration.

These arts businesses earned \$11,954,807 in revenues and a total business or program income of \$26,561,102. Every \$1 of public funds invested in arts businesses supported by New Mexico Arts leveraged \$26 of additional income.

New Mexico Arts-funded businesses or projects took place in 28 of New Mexico's 33 counties in which 99% of the state's population of almost 2.1 million people live.

Over 1.1 million New Mexicans benefited from these programs and services, and over 300,000 youth were served. In comparison, attendance and outreach at state museums and monuments for the same time period totaled 1.2 million with a significantly larger public investment of approximately \$19 million.

Arts businesses funded by New Mexico Arts achieved these results without the private and public support available to most small businesses in the state, including working capital loans, tax credits, and a state-wide economic development infrastructure.

A total of 1,077 paid staff with average salaries of less than \$10,000 per year generated an average of approximately \$25,000 of income. They operate with a minimum of paid staff working for historically low salaries. According to the US Department of Labor, hotel and food services is the only employment sector in New Mexico with lower annual salaries.

In addition to paid staff, a passion for the arts drew many to work pro bono for arts businesses, volunteering their time and expertise. In fiscal year 2010, 14,054 volunteers (including board members) donated their services in support of these businesses to yield a contribution valued at almost \$8 million. This does not include additional community investments such as rent, equipment and supplies.

New Mexico Arts invested in arts businesses with an average of:

- 7 paid staff
- 65 professional artists served or employed
- 86 volunteers
- 7,117 individuals benefiting
- 1,867 youth served
- A public investment of \$5,957



Old Pass Gallery, Raton

Photo by Ray Wolf

Cultural Plan Implementation

Progress Report Template

A lead agency will assess the effectiveness of the community's cultural plan. Federal and state agencies, foundations and community sponsors require annual reporting. Review each goal and compile the findings into an annual progress report. Include strategies implemented, challenges encountered, any needed revisions of strategies, numbers of community partners and volunteers involved, numbers of people served, outreach components employed, economic impact, and impact on the community's quality of life.

Date:

Organization or agency overseeing the cultural plan:

Name of person completing this form:

Address:

City/Town/Zip:

Telephone:

Email:

Webpage Address:

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY. ZERO AND "N/A" ARE ACCEPTABLE ANSWERS.

Goals and Strategies

Briefly describe the following:

Goals that were addressed

Strategies employed

Economic development strategies implemented

Community partners involved and their contribution to implementing the cultural plan

Challenges and how they were addressed

Describe donated goods and/or services (in-kind contributions)

On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest), how do you rate the impact of the cultural plan on the community's quality of life

1 2 3 4 5

Community Impact

Provide numbers for the following:

Total residents served

Artists involved

Children and youth served

Number of underserved involved

Full-time staff

Part-time staff

Contracted service providers

Volunteers

Approximate number of tourists

FUNDING SOURCES

Actual Gross Revenues

Points of Sale Income	\$
Business/Corporate Funding	\$
Foundation Funding	\$
Government Funding	\$
City	\$
County	\$
State	\$
Federal	\$
Private Funding	\$
Other	\$
Total Gross Revenues	\$
Impact on Lodging/Restaurants (Gross Receipts (Estimated))	\$
In-Kind Donations (goods and/or services)	\$
Total Gross Revenue, All Sources	\$

Resources

Americans for the Arts Website: <http://www.artsusa.org>

Borrupt, Tom *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Art and Culture*, Partners for Livable Communities, Fieldstone Alliance Publication, 2006 www.fieldstonealliance.org

Brown, Janet. *Authentic Passion: An Introduction to the Arts in Rural and Small Communities*. The Community Arts Network

Dreeszen, Craig. (1997). *Community Cultural Planning Handbook: A Guide for Community Leaders*. Washington, DC: Americans for the Arts & the Arts Extension Service, University of Massachusetts

Markusen, Ann, Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*, a white paper for the Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, 2010. Download this publication off the NEA's website: <http://www.nea.gov/pub/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

National Endowment for the Arts Website: <http://www.nea.gov>

National Governor's Association <http://www.nga.org/cms/home.html>

The National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practice is an excellent resource for a national perspective on issues effecting community and civic life. The association offers well-researched publications on arts and cultural development. (Click on NGA Center for Best Practice, Issues, Arts and the Economy)

New Mexico Arts Website: <http://www.nmarts.org/>

New Mexico MainStreet: <http://www.nmarts.org/>

Wali, Alaka, Rebecca Severson, Mario Longoni. *The Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity, and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places*. Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College, 2002



Historic Shuler Theater

Raton Arts & Cultural District

