

SUPPORT FOR ARTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Through many kinds of grants and services, state arts agencies increase citizen access to the arts and help each state to cultivate and promote its creative assets. This is especially true in rural communities*, where state arts agencies play a vital role in facilitating arts production, promotion, participation and preservation. The arts help to address some of the unique challenges faced by rural communities, including geographic isolation, infrastructure limitations and population flight. The arts can help to diversify rural economies by creating sustainable small businesses, improving quality of life for residents, and attracting visitors and investment.

State arts agencies serve rural communities in a variety of ways:

Addressing accessibility and equity: As stewards of public funds, state arts agencies have special responsibilities to make sure that underserved communities have equitable access to cultural resources. Because they administer both federal and state dollars, state arts agencies are in a strong position to ensure that this combined investment reaches rural communities. While 17% of the U.S. population lives in rural communities, 25% of all state arts agency grants go to these communities. Although these percentages vary from state to state, states with larger rural populations direct larger proportions of grants to rural communities.

State Arts Agency (SAA) Grants to Rural Areas	
Grant dollars awarded:	\$36,533,001
Share of all SAA grant dollars	16%
Largest grant	\$604,462
Median grant	\$2,234
Number of grants awarded:	5,494
Share of all SAA grants	25%
Number of rural communities served	2,185

Source: NASAA Final Descriptive Reports, 2011

Addressing unique infrastructure: Proximity to a metropolitan area often allows citizens to access major performing arts centers, museums, and a myriad of cultural activities and markets for cultural goods. In areas where this type of urban infrastructure doesn't exist, state arts agencies provide crucial services and programming through a variety of community facilities such as schools, community centers and other public venues.

Grant funding: State arts agencies invest more than \$36.5 million in rural communities. These grants support all types of arts activities, disciplines, arts education activities and a diverse range of institutions. State arts agencies make nearly 5,500 direct grants to 2,185 rural communities across the country. The extent of state arts agencies' reach into rural areas is even broader among those states with regranting or [decentralization programs](#).

Preserving cultural heritage: In addition to grants that support arts activities, states offer a variety of services and initiatives aimed at promoting and preserving cultural heritage in rural communities. State arts agency initiatives such as heritage trails, cultural tourism programs and support for the traditional arts help sustain and promote distinctive cultural assets and inform the public about the value of these assets.

Partnerships with other government service organizations: State arts agencies partner with multiple federal and state service organizations that administer programs in rural areas. For example, states promote arts and health care initiatives in conjunction with health and human service agencies, and facilitate using the arts for rural economic development in conjunction with county, state and federal development agencies.

* For the purpose of this fact sheet, *rural* is defined as counties outside of any [metropolitan statistical areas](#) (MSAs). An MSA is defined by the [Office of Management and Budget](#) (OMB) as a city or urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more, including the county containing the city and all contiguous counties that are economically and socially integrated with the central county.

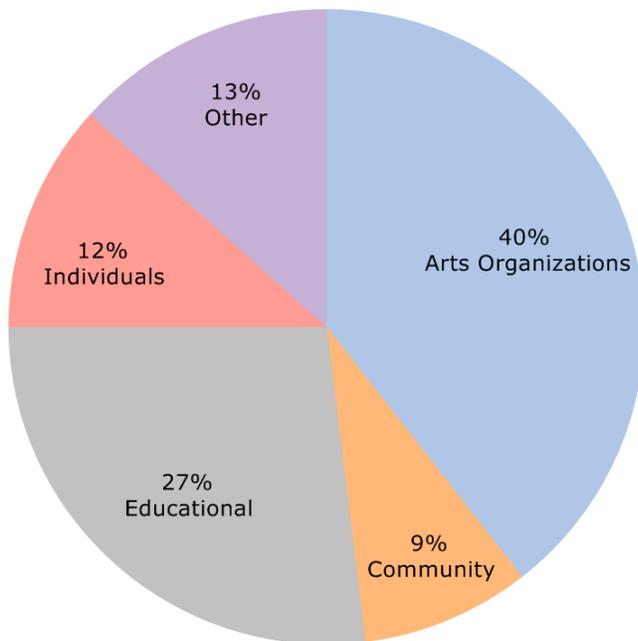
State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Arts Agencies

Fiscal Years 2002-2011

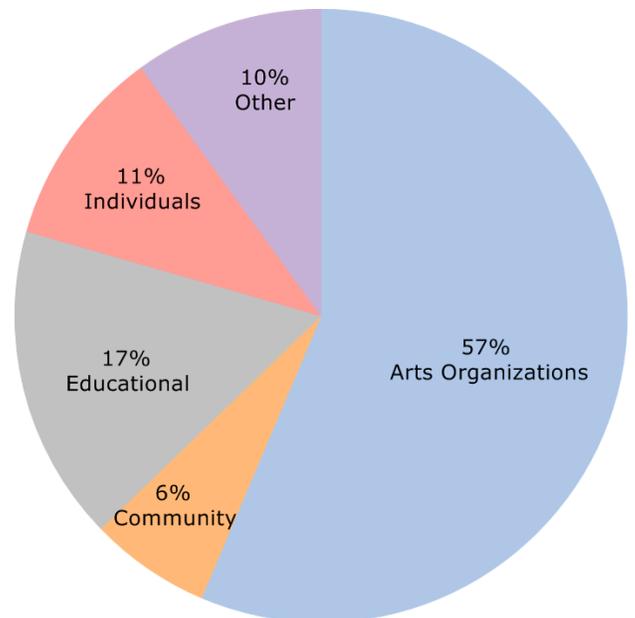
Fiscal Year	Number of Grants	Percent of SAA Grants	Grant Dollars	Percent of SAA Grant Dollars
2002	7,269	26%	\$42,911,081	12%
2003	6,890	26%	\$39,950,608	13%
2004	6,671	28%	\$34,028,063	14%
2005	6,750	27%	\$38,845,412	14%
2006	6,935	26%	\$37,722,830	13%
2007	5,953	25%	\$37,678,754	13%
2008	6,157	25%	\$41,247,122	15%
2009	5,844	25%	\$38,696,020	15%
2010	5,491	25%	\$37,944,043	16%
2011	5,494	25%	\$36,533,001	16%

Note: The figures in this snapshot represent data from 2011 or the most recent information available. Statistics reflect only grants awarded by the state arts agency; they do not reflect nongrant programs and services, which in some instances make up a substantial portion of state arts agency activities.

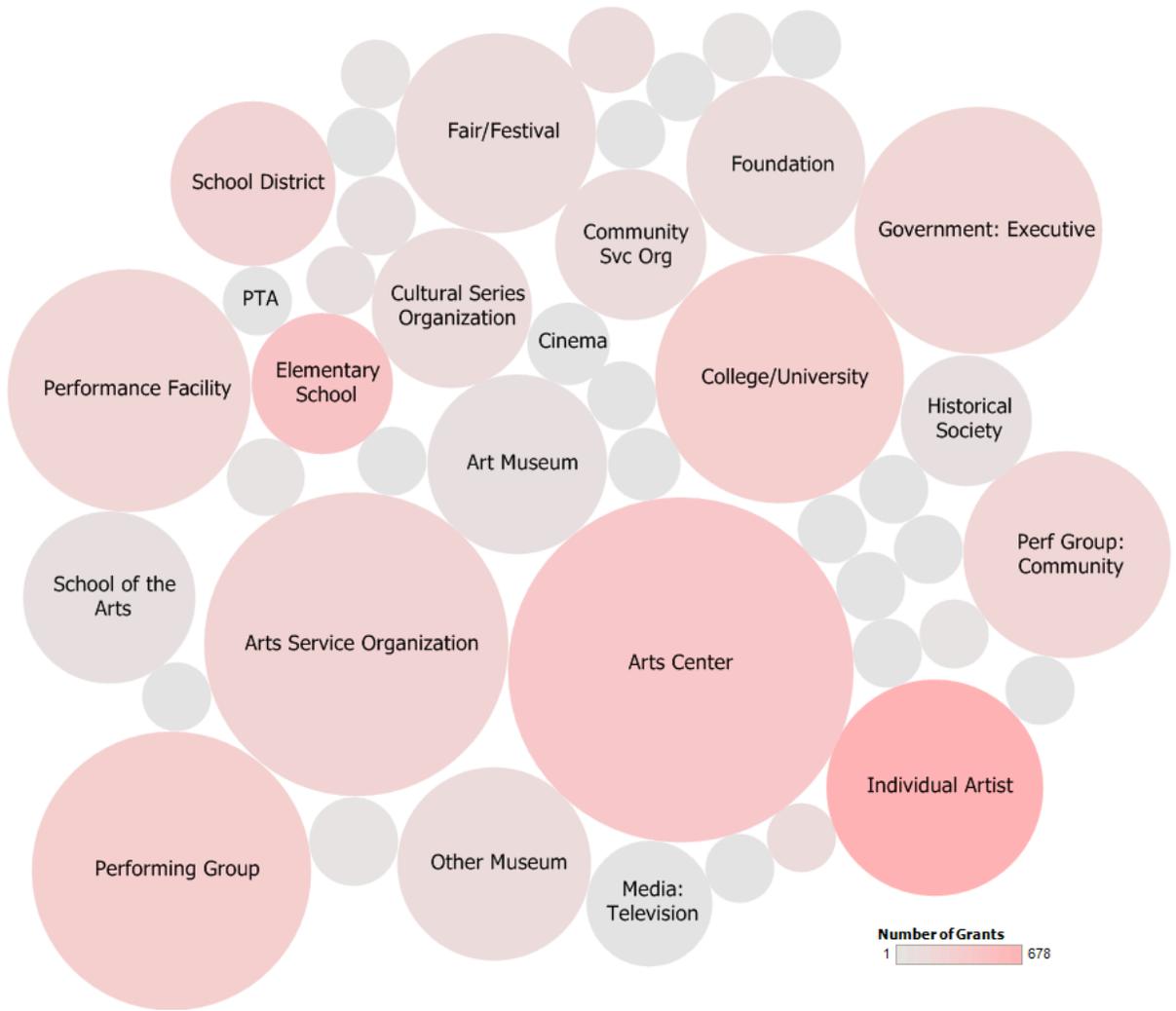
State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Communities by Institution Type



State Arts Agency Grants to Urban Communities by Institution Type



**Rural Grantee Institutions by
Number of Grants and Dollar Amount**



Source: NASAA Final Descriptive Reports, 2011

Note: Color shows the number of grants. Size shows sum of dollars awarded. Each circle represents a grantee institution type; selective labels are applied to illustrate the variety of these grantees. The view excludes grants to local arts agencies and those records not reporting an institution classification.

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) represents the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies and serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding and the arts. This report draws on data from state arts agencies' final descriptive reports of grant-making activity submitted annually to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and NASAA. NASAA's collection of grant-making statistics is supported in part through a cooperative agreement with the NEA. For more information on the work of state arts agencies, call NASAA at 202-347-6352, e-mail nasaa@nasaa-arts.org or visit www.nasaa-arts.org.



**National Assembly of
State Arts Agencies**

KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY



State Arts Agency Awards In Rural Areas

Award Sites – Fiscal Year 2011

