



Maryland State Arts Council

An agency of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development; Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts.
Martin O'Malley, Governor

Building economically prosperous communities where the arts thrive!

MARYLAND'S ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

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Background

- Created in 2001 by state legislation
- Program of D.B.E.D.
- First state to create statewide tax benefit jurisdiction for arts districts
- 15 communities designated

Flagship model for creative community building and tourism marketing

- Preliminary discussions / site visits with jurisdiction
- Application preparation and submission by local Steering Committee
- Interdepartmental State Review Committee
- Designation by Secretary of the Department of Business and Economic Development

Benefits & Incentives

- Property tax credits for renovations that create live-work space or arts and entertainment enterprises
- Income tax subtraction modification for income from artistic works sold by qualified resident artists
- Admissions and amusement tax exemption

District Locations



- Gateway
- Hagerstown
- Silver Spring
- Station North
- Cambridge
- Cumberland
- Bethesda
- Highlandtown
- Frederick
- Denton
- Berlin
- Wheaton
- Snow Hill
- Elkton
- Salisbury

15 communities in 11 counties

Program Goals

- Create arts “destinations”
- Leverage state resources
- Support diverse cultural communities
- Encourage neighborhood revitalization
- Provide authentic local experiences
- Foster communities for artists to live, work and thrive

Successful Districts

- Dedicated staff, strong management plan
- Local arts council presence
- Destination restaurants
- Anchor arts attractions
- Special events, festivals and promotions
- Cultural identity and branding
- Committed developer
- Affordable live/work space

Findings

- Designation provides effective cultural planning tool
- District success rooted in local efforts and support
- Thriving districts have multiple development designations - A&E, historic, main street
- Categories: Established (Thriving); Emerging (Growing); Nascent (Need Threshold)

Challenges

- No financial investment in program or marketing
- Program coordination fragmented/outside of MSAC
- Irregular marketing and technical support
- Tax benefits underutilized and no record of incentives
- Real estate market precluded affordable, live/work spaces
- Speculators holding vacant and valuable properties

Opportunities

- Growing dialogue on role art and culture play in “livable communities”
- Interest by towns to seek designation and collaborative planning
- Individual artists, entrepreneurs and emerging enterprises
- New resident populations