

# Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

## THE STATS

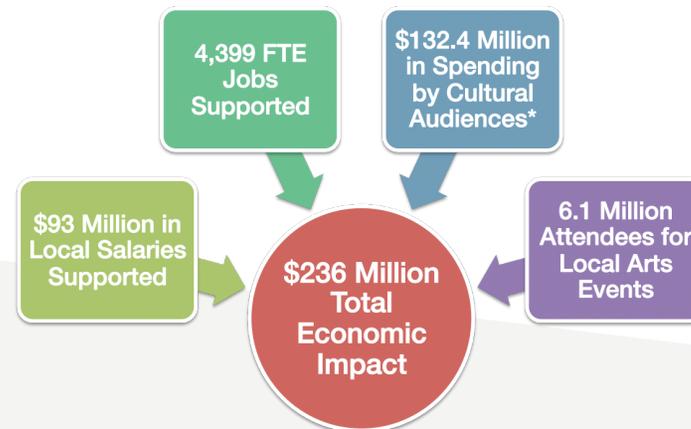
OPERATIONAL SINCE 1976

ANNUAL GRANTMAKING: \$5.8 MILLION

SIZE OF GRANT POOL: 150 GRANTS TO

ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS IN FY2016,

SERVING A COUNTY-WIDE POPULATION OF 1,040,116.



“We often ask ourselves: ‘How do we measure the impact of philanthropy on the arts?’ We can be highly formulaic and give organizations a percentage of their income and expenses, but evaluating our applicant pool on more specific criteria to make a case with real data takes the guess work out of funding organizations in a way that positively impacts the community.”

## What They Do

The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC), in partnership with the community, cultivates and supports excellence in the arts and humanities, expands access to cultural expression, and contributes to economic vitality in the region. Since 1976, AHCMC has been Montgomery County’s designated local arts agency. Through programs and services, AHCMC provides the infrastructure and support necessary to maintain a robust creative

All images part of Strength of the Creative Economy advocacy document in collaboration with CDP data and Arts and Economic Prosperity Studies.

community that includes over 500 cultural organizations and 2,000 artists and scholars. AHCMC annually distributes over \$5 million in grants to organizations and individuals to help fund enriching cultural activities in Montgomery County.

## The Challenge

AHCMC faces two key, interrelated issues: serving the diverse array of artists, scholars and cultural organizations in Montgomery County, and evaluating the impact of investment across the sector. Suzan Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, said,



*“We need to stop letting others tell the story about what influences a community’s vitality and start looking at the facts. Data allows us to take control of the message and change the conversation not just for Montgomery County but for the entire sector.”*

### Suzan Jenkins

Chief Executive Officer, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

## How Data Makes a Difference

AHCMC implemented the DataArts Cultural Profile (CDP) in grantmaking in 2008. These reports help to determine how grants will or will not make a difference for both the community and applicant organization as well as providing sources for year-over-year trending in their grant pool. “The CDP makes grantmaking much easier because we no longer have to play a guessing game when it comes

to evaluating our applicants. Now we have more insight into how well an organization is run, if it is fiscally responsible, and other measures that determine if an organization is seeking artistic support on solid footing.”

DataArts’ tools also help support AHCMC’s applicants as they paint more accurate, credible narratives leveraging data to enhance their application through helpful analytics and easy-to-use reports as they apply for grants.

## DataArts, in a Word

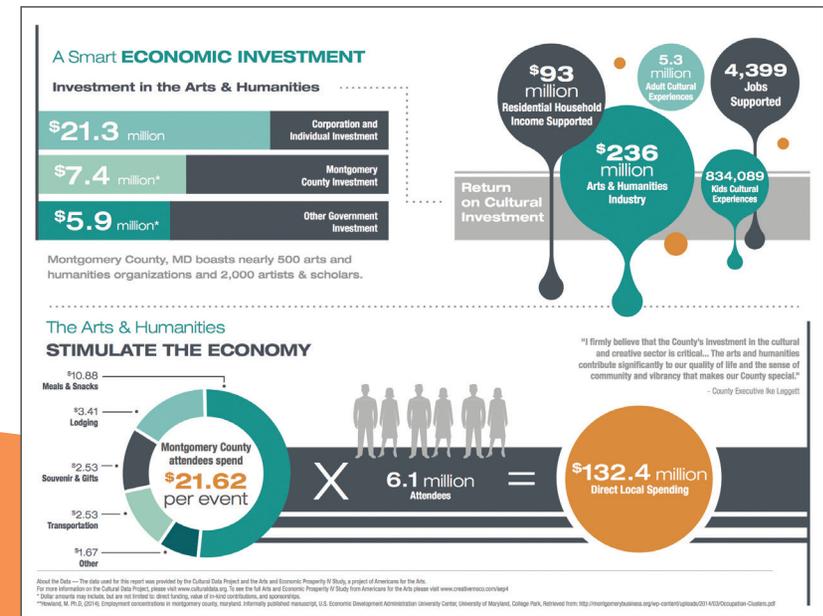
“**Scalable.** Once AHCMC started crunching numbers from DataArts and other sources, we realized how impactful it could be for the community at large. With hard numbers,

## About DataArts

DataArts is a nonprofit organization that empowers the arts and cultural sector with high-quality data and resources in order to strengthen its vitality, performance, and public impact. The Cultural Data Profile (CDP) is DataArts’ flagship service, which thousands of cultural nonprofits use annually to report their financial and programmatic information. DataArts is a catalyst for data-informed decision-making that results in stronger management for arts and cultural organizations, better-informed philanthropy, and a rich information resource for advocates and researchers. For more information, visit us at [www.culturaldata.org](http://www.culturaldata.org).

we can talk about the economic impact of the sector with legislators and with the artists and cultural organizations we serve so that the community at large can see themselves in the data. In this manner, we have demonstrated that positive change can happen at the organizational and legislative levels.

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