

Building Creativity
Final Draft: Performing Arts Study
Executive Summary

Introduction

Webb Management Services and Wolf Brown was engaged by the City of Madison to help the community consider how the performing arts sector can best serve and engage Madison in the short, medium and long-term. The effort included a review of four key areas:

- ❖ Artists and Arts Organizations
 - What is the current state of Madison's performing arts sector?
 - What are the existing challenges?
 - Is there demand for new and/or better facilities for performance, rehearsal, teaching, production, storage and administration?
- ❖ Audiences
 - Are Madison's performing arts groups extracting a reasonable amount of demand from the marketplace, given the demographic characteristics of the marketplace?
 - Is there room for audience growth? If so, where is the greatest potential?
 - What trends in cultural participation are most likely to affect Madison performing arts organizations, and what are the implications of these trends on facility needs?
- ❖ Facilities
 - How are venues supporting performing arts, creative, education and business organizations in the performing arts sector?
 - How are these venues supporting audience participation and community involvement?
 - Are gaps in the inventory limiting opportunities for performing arts programming and audience participation?
 - What impact might different, improved or new facilities might have on the market and operation of existing and planned facilities?
- ❖ Funding
 - What do levels and sources of earned and contributed income suggest about the health and sustainability of the performing arts sector in Madison?
 - Does the current funding scenario and climate suggest a need to develop or augment particular funding sources?
 - What do nationwide trends and funding scenarios in comparable communities suggest about funding gaps and priorities in Madison

To consider those issues, Webb Management Services and Wolf Brown:

- ❖ Undertook an extensive series of individual interviews with artists, arts organizations, board members, community leaders and other constituents;
- ❖ Developed, issued and analyzed results of a survey of performing arts facility satisfaction and demand;
- ❖ Developed an inventory of existing facilities used on a regular basis for performing arts, including information on their programming and physical features;

- ❖ Compared programming and funding levels for the performing arts to markets of comparable size and characteristics;
- ❖ Facilitated a community workshop on trends in cultural participation;
- ❖ Conducted a mapping analysis of a cross-section of performing arts ticket buyer mailing lists;
- ❖ Developed an inferential analysis of demand in the Madison marketplace based on participation estimates from the National Endowment for the Arts;
- ❖ Designed and implemented a survey of a cross-section of known ticket buyers in the Madison area; and
- ❖ Collected and analyzed funding data from dozens of local arts groups.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Collaborative Efforts (pg. 56)

Key leaders should collectively identify short-term projects as well as more substantial initiatives, that require participation from artists and arts groups and provide some mutual benefit, whether it be professional development, exposure, employment opportunities, shared resources or otherwise.

Recommendation #2: Shared Services Entity (pg. 56)

This study's survey of local arts organizations suggests a need and opportunity for shared services to support the administration and management of organizations and businesses focused on the performing arts.

Recommendation #3: Improve Access to Existing Space (pg. 58)

The research completed for this study suggested that there is notable demand for particular types of space; there is also opportunity to better animate existing spaces.

Recommendation #4: Develop Shared Facilities for Administration, Rehearsal + Production (pg. 60)

A significant number of organizations have need for space to support the creative process, including administration, meetings, rehearsals, set production and storage.

Recommendation #5: Establish New Funding Sources Dedicated to the Arts (pg. 61)

The research conducted for this study indicates that the Madison arts community agrees that a new funding source is needed for the arts.

Recommendation #6: Develop the Next Generation of Private Sector Funders (pg. 66)

Madison must work to develop a new community of private sector philanthropists.

Recommendation #7: Develop a Nationally-Prominent Event (pg. 66)

Research compiled for this report identified a gap in festival programming and an opportunity to develop a signature event.

Recommendation #8: Provide Access Points for Students and Non-attenders (pg. 67)

The performing arts community should work together to develop a program that provides access points for local and regional residents who do not currently attend or participate in the performing arts.

Recommendation #9: Encourage Culturally Relevant Programming (pg. 67)

Research and input from interviews and our community meeting indicate that Madison's arts programming is not effectively serving or reflecting its diverse communities.

Recommendation #10: Encourage Use of the Public Survey Dashboard as a Resource (pg. 69)

WolfBrown's online dashboard tool

(<https://dashboard.intrinsicimpact.org/public/dashboards/madison>) provides arts groups with a strategic resource - helping to identify opportunities for increasing participation and attendance.

Final Thoughts

Finally, the success of the Cultural Plan and outcomes of this study will be highly dependent on Madison's capacity for implementation. The City, Dane County and the Wisconsin Arts Board all have limited human resources dedicated to the arts. As the Cultural Plan is implemented and capacity is developed, these initiatives would be appropriate for a resulting service organization to undertake. But, many would be more effectively developed as "sector-wide initiatives," undertaken by an active collaboration of arts, political, and private sector leadership, recognizing that these recommendations to advance the arts in Madison can have a lasting and powerful impact on the community as a whole.