



ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 5:

USING THE REPORT'S DATA TO STRENGTHEN YOUR CASE TO BUSINESSES

**Want to know the best way to disseminate AEP 5 data to businesses in your community?
This tool-kit has hard data on the best ways to reach them, along with information on
how the arts sector has used the report.**

WHEN YOU PARTNER WITH LOCAL ARTS, YOU PARTNER WITH THE WHOLE CITY.

The arts are essential to the health and vitality of neighborhoods, cities, states and our nation. They enhance community development, create jobs, spur urban renewal, attract new businesses, draw tourism dollars, and create an environment that attracts skilled and educated workers.

Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generated \$166.3 billion in economic activity in 2015—\$63.8 billion in spending by organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event related spending by their audiences.

– From [Arts & Economic Prosperity 5](#)



Every day, around 100,000 nonprofit arts and culture organizations act as economic drivers, creating an industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue, and is the cornerstone of our tourism industry. Americans for the Arts' Art & Economic Prosperity (AEP) report documents the key role played by the nonprofit arts and culture industry, and their audiences, in strengthening our nation's economy. Two years after the release of the fourth AEP report in the past 20 years, we did an exhaustive survey of the arts sector to learn how local arts agencies and other organizations from the arts sector used the data. This tool-kit covers their results of approaching businesses, and outlines those tactics that were most successful; suggestions that still hold true for the latest version of the report.



60% OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS SAW POSITIVE IMPACTS TO THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH BUSINESSES, WHICH THEY CONSIDERED TO BE A DIRECT RESULT OF THE STUDY.

“We’ve been using report since the beginning—at least 20 years...it’s the most important information you can give business people and legislators. It is THE way to get their attention and to get dollars.”

– United Arts of Central Florida

Why does AEP5 Matter to Businesses?

- Business associations agree that AEP 5 provides data that advances business and community objectives. [The Conference Board](#), a global business membership and research association and [CECP](#) (The CEO Force for Good) signed on as study partners to help private sector leaders understand the economic and social benefits that the arts bring to their communities.

“Even in a strong economy, some may perceive the arts as an unaffordable luxury. Fortunately, this rigorous report offers evidence that the nonprofit arts industry provides not just cultural benefits to our communities, but also makes significant positive economic contributions to the nation’s financial well-being regardless of the overall state of the economy.”

– President & CEO Jonathan Spector, The Conference Board

- Business leaders love numbers, and AEP 5 is chock full of them. Data is often the language of the business community, which relies on the bottom line to formulate opinions and make decisions. AEP 5 data can help tell our story in the language of numbers.
- In addition, the numbers in AEP 5 have a direct impact on businesses in your community, as they deal with the economic impact of the arts on all sectors of the region, including the private sector.
- AEP 5 proves that an investment in and relationship with the nonprofit arts community is a fruitful one, resulting in jobs and revenue for locally-based businesses not typically associated with the arts.
- Check out the [Charts, Graphs, and Tables](#) section of our AEP 5 Press & Media page for one-pagers on specific numbers relating to jobs, event-related spending, and more.

Stand Shoulder to Shoulder with Business

- Survey participants who utilized previous AEP studies stated that the information allowed them to “speak the language of business” and gave them confidence and credibility in their interactions with business.
- The report gave them a “seat at the table” with businesses and chambers of commerce. It allowed them to inject the arts into conversations around community and economic development.
- The report raised the general awareness of the arts sector within the business community, and validated the existence of the arts within society.
- Most important of all, survey participants who utilize AEP developed the ability to change how the local business community perceived the arts, through using data presented in the study.

Publicizing the Research

Make the most use of AEP 5 by spreading the word – the community is ready and waiting. Did you know that 82 percent of Americans believe that the arts and culture are important to local businesses and the economy? Businesses themselves agree. The [2017 Business Contributions to the Arts Survey](#) reveals that 67 percent of U.S. companies support the arts because it improves the economy and quality of life.

“As a banker, I have visited businesses in almost every city and town in my state. There is a visible difference in places with a vibrant arts community. I see people looking for places to park, stores staying open late, and restaurants packed with diners... The business day is extended and the cash registers are ringing.”

– Ken Ferguson, Chairman & CEO, NBanC; Past President, American Bankers Association

- Get started by distributing copies of the study to businesses in your area. This is a very basic way to reinforce the message that the arts stimulate local economies. (95% of survey participants)
- Use our free [AEP 5 calculator](#) to estimate the economic impact of your nonprofit arts community. This is a great way to localize the data for greater impact. (15% of survey participants)
- Hold a public release event, press conference, breakfast, etc. to announce the release of the report to key members of your business community. Be sure to include the **#AEP5** hashtag in all related social media and web posts. (29% of survey participants)



- Create a press release using your own template (49% of survey participants)
- Create a press release using [Americans for the Arts' template](#) (60% of survey participants)



OF ALL THE INTERVIEWED STUDY PARTNERS, 47% SAW AN INCREASE IN BUSINESS PARTICIPATION, 22% OF WHICH FELT THAT THIS WAS DIRECTLY DUE TO THE LATEST AEP STUDY.

“It gives the business community a connector. It enables them to talk with us in a language that they are comfortable with. It has been incredibly invaluable- our economic development agency undertook a year-long study for the economic impact regarding industries and they included me on the board. They included the arts as a key part of growing the economy and the other various sectors. It is interesting because I am now thought of an industry sector representative. The arts are now an industry sector here.”

– Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs

TIPS FROM YOUR PEERS

- Focus on the local! Nearly 70% of the survey participants stated that responses on the local level were the most common and frequent.

“It’s given us some legitimacy when we are asking our local municipalities and local businesses for support.”

– Arts Council of Moore County

- In the survey, the numbers themselves were cited as being a key talking point, in particular how they demonstrated the impact of the nonprofit arts sector on the economy of their entire region.

“For our community we start talking about the impact of baseball, then flip the card around and show the economic impact of the arts. Our hotel association had no idea of the magnitude of the role the arts sector played.”

– Lee County Alliance for the Arts

- Target areas of the private sector that have a large presence in your community.

“There’s a heavy focus on tourism in Chicago, so cultural travel has been a helpful message. We’re able to push back against the notion that arts are a black hole.”

– Arts Alliance Illinois

- Make numerical comparisons to other industries in your community to show the vast economic impact of the arts.

“I show them the total arts attendance—it’s bigger than our sports teams. 11 million arts attendees compared with 7 million for sports.”

– St Louis Regional Arts Council



- Employment numbers (both paid and voluntary) were cited by survey participants as a very powerful tool when making the case to businesses, particularly as the release of the study was during a period in which jobs were a concern to most communities. To help spread the word, consider tweeting community influencers with facts, figures and the **#AEP5** hashtag.
- If you have the means, design an infographic with the information that is most relevant to the business leaders in your community. Include the **#AEP5** hashtag within the infographic promotions and encourage others to do the same.

“We learned that people respond to pictures and graphs, and less to words - use easy to understand graphs and pictures.”

– Arts Council of Fort Worth and Tarrant County

Don't just chase the large corporations. Per the [2017 Business Contributions to the Arts Survey](#), over half of companies with revenue between \$1 million and \$49.9 million are supporters of the arts through marketing or sponsorship dollars. Small companies with 1- 99 employees contribute about 46% of their philanthropic budgets to the arts, as opposed to the average of 27% across all company sizes. 67% of surveyed small companies actually increased their arts contributions since 2013. Research shows that small businesses are turning to the arts to fuel their marketing aspirations.



Why Doesn't Every Organization Work with Business?

MISCONCEPTION:

Of the nearly 17% of survey participants who stated that they did not approach businesses, the most common reason for not doing so was that they believed that the work wasn't in their mission, and they relied on other organizations to spread the word about the benefit the arts can have on business.

REALITY:

The reality is that every arts organization should be starting or keeping a conversation alive with businesses, and a strong arts community involves support from all sectors. Initiatives that encourage partnerships between the arts and business should be occurring at all organizations, of all sizes, all over the country. Even if it's not a direct goal of your organization to connect with the business world, there is power in numbers. Working with another organization whose focus it is to approach businesses is a great way to build clout for the movement, and to strengthen the argument that the arts are with a good partner for business. Businesses actually seek to engage employees through the arts to increase retention and workplace interest. According to the [2017 Business Contributions to the Arts Survey](#), 68% of companies offer board service opportunities and 65% offer volunteer opportunities at arts organizations.

MISCONCEPTION:

Other survey participants stated that they felt that businesses in their specific region were not interested in the numbers.

REALITY:

If you never try, you'll never know. Or, if you've tried once without much luck, try again with a different approach. Pairing your tactic of personal appeals for phone calls or coffee to start a casual relationship with hard data will appeal to businesses that are attracted to personal anecdotes and those that require numbers to prove the efficacy of a partnership with the arts. The perception in your community may be that the private sector is not interested in partnering with the arts, but perhaps you are just using the wrong argument to win the case? The [2017 Business Contributions to the Arts Survey](#) shows that the most compelling reason for giving across all business sizes was the point that the arts "contribute to the economy and quality of life in the community." AEP 5 is stocked full of data to support a new approach. Also, read our pARTnership Movement tool-kit, [Building Partnerships on Your Own](#), to learn more about other messages and approaches that can work for the business community.



Other Americans for the Arts Resources

- It's important to remember that even though AEP data is a wonderful way to build relationships with businesses, it's not the only tool out there. Visit the [pARTnership Movement](#), an initiative from Americans for the Arts designed to reach business leaders with the message that partnering with the arts can build their competitive advantage, for tool-kits and other resources to assist you in forming relationships with the private sector.
- Read more about the [Arts & Economic Prosperity Report](#).
- Learn about our [Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts](#) reports, which offer a research-based approach to understanding the scope and importance of the arts to the nation's economy.
- Want more information on customized reports? Contact the [research services team](#) to learn more about these opportunities!