



## **PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP OFFERS NEW TOOLS FOR MINNESOTA'S ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS TO GATHER POWERFUL DATA**

**June 1, 2012, Minneapolis, MN**—Arts and cultural organizations in Minnesota will now have access to state of the art technology to help them strengthen their management capacity and demonstrate their value and impact in communities. The Cultural Data Project (CDP), a web-based data collection tool for arts and cultural organizations and their advocates, is launching today with the help of a consortium of public and private funders.

“Always mindful of the power in numbers, the Cultural Data Project depends on a spirit of shared work toward shared goals,” said Kate Wolford, president of The McKnight Foundation, one of the many funders of the Minnesota CDP. “In an unprecedented partnership among public and private funders, Minnesota’s arts and culture leaders break new ground today in the scope of their support of CDP. A clear reflection of the value we believe this initiative will bring, already more than a dozen regional private, state, and community funders have committed resources toward this field-building tool.”

The Cultural Data Project has emerged as a national resource for collecting and disseminating reliable, standardized data for the cultural sector. Operated at The Pew Charitable Trusts, the CDP is designed for arts and cultural organizations of every size and discipline, from festivals and fiscally sponsored groups to museums, theatres, historic sites, publications, and more. It is serving more than 12,000 arts and cultural organizations in 12 states and the District of Columbia.

Once participants supply the wide range of financial, programmatic and operational data, the CDP serves as a repository and financial management tool. Organizations can instantly generate information for grant applications, or create on demand 77 different analytic reports on topics such as program activity, free and paid attendance, balance sheet trends, or marketing expenses to present to their donors or boards. Organizations can also use the CDP to understand how they operate in comparison to groups of similar organizations in their community, or communities in other CDP states. Those participating in the Minnesota CDP will have access to a team of on-call database specialists and financial consultants who will offer support for CDP data input.

“The Cultural Data Project gives the arts and culture community a set of professional tools whose application builds contextual and analytical information that strengthens the field,” said Cindy Gehrig, president of the Jerome Foundation.

Participating grantmakers are committed to streamlining the grant application process for cultural organizations and many will be requiring participation in the CDP as part of that goal. Once users supply their data, the CDP allows them to easily generate reports that automatically organize their information to meet each participating funder’s requirements.

“We hope that the Cultural Data Project will provide Minnesota arts and cultural organizations with data and tools that will help them more strategically manage their resources,” said Sue Gens, executive director of the Minnesota State Arts Board. “In addition, the project will provide information that grantmakers will be able to use to assess the impact of their investments.”

With the CDP, research and advocacy organizations can provide a clearer snapshot of arts and culture in a region, demonstrating how vital a role the sector plays. In regions where the project has been in existence for many years, the CDP has been used successfully to provide policymakers evidence of the sector’s assets and needs. For example, the New York Council for the Humanities used CDP data to make the case for the size and economic footprint of the state's cultural sector and how their work makes a positive impact on it, at a time when they were facing continued budget cuts. As a result, and for the first time in two years, the Council was fully reinstated in the state budget.

“We are pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the CDP. The more we know about ourselves and our community, the better we will serve Minnesotans, who care deeply about and have wholeheartedly supported arts, culture and history,” said Steve Elliott, director and CEO of the Minnesota Historical Society.

*For more information on the Minnesota Cultural Data Project, visit [www.mnculturaldata.org](http://www.mnculturaldata.org).*

*The Cultural Data Project is brought to Minnesota by a taskforce of public and private funders and advocacy agencies, consisting of the F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota, Jerome Foundation, Mardag Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, Minnesota Council on Foundations, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota State Arts Board, City of Saint Paul, The Saint Paul Foundation, and Target; with guidance from the members of the Minnesota CDP Launch Advisory Committee: Minnesota Theater Alliance, Springboard for the Arts, and VocalEssence. Additional support is provided by: Bush Foundation, General Mills Foundation, and John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.*

*The Cultural Data Project, which originated in Pennsylvania, is governed by a consortium of organizations including the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, The Heinz Endowments, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the William Penn Foundation.*

*[The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today’s most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life. Pew partners with a diverse range of donors, public and private organizations and concerned citizens who share its commitment to fact-based solutions and goal-driven investments to improve society.*

###