Sources

About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation is a leading voice and catalyst for innovative solutions to the region’s most challenging problems. Our mission, vision, and values reflect our commitment to serving the vibrant communities in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We bring together diverse groups of people—nonprofit, donors, government leaders, business people, faith-based organizations—all of whom care deeply about improving the quality of life in our region. Our goal is impact and we employ a variety of strategies to achieve it, including grantsmaking, community initiatives, donor engagement, convening and research.

Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Serving San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties

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The Community Input Project
Silicon Valley Community Foundation is committed to supporting the best ideas and most effective solutions—at the local and the regional levels. With those goals in mind, the community foundation has initiated the Community Input Project, a series of strategic conversations around needs and issues that matter most. The issues were selected based on a review of local data, the many excellent assessments available about the health, social and environmental concerns in the region, and issues community members and leaders have identified.

The community foundation anticipates this process will spur a greater interest in regional partnerships as well as strategic solutions for meaningful, lasting and transformative change. The community foundation’s board of directors will take the results of the community input process into consideration when making decisions about future directions and strategies.

This brief represents a summary of important trends and issues related to Arts and Culture. Similar briefs will be available in the areas of immigration, environment, community economic development, affordable housing, health, civic engagement, child and youth development, and education.

Major Trends
Decline in federal and state funding for the arts. The arts and cultural sector in the Silicon Valley is constantly challenged as well as sustained by local, national and global economic, demographic and technological trends. The decline in federal funding for major arts organizations in the mid-1980s resulted in significant cuts in fellowship programs at institutions such as the National Endowment for the Arts. (4) Likewise, California’s extended fiscal crisis has led policymakers to cut funding for services not perceived to be a basic need, resulting in significant cuts to public funding for the arts and cultural sector (6).

Shits in why the public values art. A 2006 report commissioned by the James Irvine Foundation on the state of the arts in California suggests that following four decades of expansion in the number and diversity of nonprofit cultural providers, the sector is facing major challenges. The report argues that funding for arts organizations derive from a blurring between the commercial and nonprofit sectors. Moving from valuing arts for their own sake, the public is shifting toward valuing the arts for their social and economic worth. Consequently, the rationale for public support for the arts has diminished, especially in California.

Changes in how art is consumed as a result of technology. Technological advances and new communication tools are also transforming the way Americans produce and consume art and culture. New computer and television technologies (IPods, DVDs, MP3s) and the rise of social networking sites like MySpace are changing the way people experience and build community. These technologies allow people to curate their own artistic experiences and the for-profit sector is meeting the demands of these niche markets. Consequently, it is increasingly assumed that the market can provide what people want in terms of cultural experiences. Leaning arts nonprofits having to justify their public value (4).

A pull on creative talent into the private sector. Individuals from this “creative sector” — a mix of nonprofit arts and for-profit creative industries such as design and film making—are becoming highly desirable. People trained in the applied arts, visual arts, literary arts and media are in demand as companies race to make products engaging and artistically pleasing. Increasingly, young artists are going through the for-profit sector, or through unincorporated and informal venues, to present their work to the public (5, 6).

Increase in pursuit of personal creativity coupled with decreased in demand for traditional forms of professional artistic experience. The number of people engaged in making art as “amateurs” is also rising dramatically. According to the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College, a nation of 200 million adults, over 25 million play classical music or jazz. Over 35 million sing in choirs, operas or musicals. Over 20 million paint or draw, over 33 million write creatively and over 7 million compose music. A random-sample survey of over 1,000 adults in Santa Clara County found that 55 percent are active art-makers, with 31 percent painting or drawing, 10 percent playing a musical instrument, 22 percent engaging in creative writing and 19 percent participating in dance. This dramatic increase in people pursuing personal creatively is occurring while their demand for traditional forms of nonprofit arts, such as theatres, ballets, symphonies and museums, is declining (3, 5, 6).

Regional Indicators
• Between 1995 and 2004, the number of arts organizations in the Silicon Valley increased by 54 percent (2).

Growth of Arts & Cultural Nonprofit Organizations in Silicon Valley
Source: 2007 Silicon Valley Index
• Santa Clara County’s nonprofit cultural sector is made up of about 400 active arts and cultural organizations that are evenly distributed across artistic disciplines (5).

Distribution of Santa Clara County Arts Organizations by Artistic Disciplines
Source: Creative Community Index: Measuring Progress Towards a Vibrant Silicon Valley
• Fifty-four percent of the region’s arts organizations were founded after 1996 and a quarter are older than 20 years (2).
• Since 2001, revenue for Silicon Valley’s arts and cultural nonprofits has decreased (2).
• While contributions, including private gifts and public grants, to Santa Clara County arts organizations increased by 18 percent since 1995, individual contributions were much less than the national average (9).

Distribution of Contributed Income to the Arts Organizations, 2005
Source: National Arts Data Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>National</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Gifts</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Creative Community Index: Measuring Progress Towards a Vibrant Silicon Valley
• Fifty-six percent of Santa Clara County residents gave their community a good rating as a place to participate with others in their favorite cultural activities (6).

Issues for Discussion
Sustainability
Adaptive capacity of traditional nonprofits. The arts and cultural nonprofit sector is facing major, permanent and structural changes brought on by technological advances and demographic shifts. These changes have resulted in new methods of arts and culture production and consumption, including more informal, individualized and populist approaches to experiencing and creating art (6).

Nonprofit arts facilities and cultural providers may not be well equipped to accommodate these structural changes. Traditional arts nonprofits are facing new and different audience development challenges as the arts become more socially diverse and people’s experiences with art become increasingly individualized. At the same time, Silicon Valley artists and arts institutions are positioned to meet the limits of performance and the visual arts by using leading technologies that have the capacity to reach wide audiences and define the frontiers of art and culture (5, 6).

Audiand fund development. There has been a 40-year push to create more nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, but not necessarily a corresponding push to generate demand for their products and revenue. Attracting and maintaining audiences becomes more critical as public funding for the arts declines (8).

Arts Education
Arts education and youth development. Academic research shows a clear, positive and demonstrable link between involvement in the arts and students’ academic achievement, engagement with learning, motivation, self-esteem and ability to collaborate with others. Moreover, studies also show that arts education needs to move beyond “imply exposure” (i.e., not just a source of educational enrichment, but a source of learning in order to attain these positive impacts (6, 9)).

Since the early 1980s, the development of voluntary national standards in arts education and the designation of the arts as a core subject under federal law helped to elevate the status of the arts in the discourse on school reform. In California, however, school-based arts programs have been adversely affected by increased competition for limited education dollars and an increased focus on tested subjects, such as mathematics and reading, for which schools are held accountable (4).

Ninety percent of adults in Santa Clara County would like to see their children receive meaningful arts education. However, arts education remains a low priority, especially in public schools, and often consists only of arts-exposure experiences. The availability of local arts education in Santa Clara County falls well below the national average and students attending high-poverty schools have less access to arts instruction than their peers at more affluent schools (4, 5).

Schools have increasingly created partnerships with visual and performing arts organizations in the community to fill the gap in arts education. In a survey of 125 arts organizations in Santa Clara County conducted by Cultural Initiatives, 52 percent reported working with K-12 schools on an ongoing basis. However, in the 2001-2002 school year, 12,000 Silicon Valley school students participated in arts-related outreach programs, but only 15 percent were included in programs that involved more than one contact with the student (5).

Arts and Community-Building
Civic engagement and economic development. The arts and cultural sector contribute both directly and indirectly to community building by catalyzing civic engagement and creating culturally and economically vital places (6). Arts and cultural participation, including amateur arts, community celebrations, festivals and neighborhood block parties, can connect people across cultures and build a more cohesive community. The Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley Creative Community Index states, “Evidence is growing that the long-term health of communities and economics is linked to a healthy stock of social capital... as a form of civic engagement, cultural participation is an important way of strengthening social capital.”

Research shows that those who participate most actively in arts and culture also participate actively in community and civic life that is, they vote, donate to charitable causes and belong to voluntary organizations (7).

Through strengthening cultural communities, the arts also create economic assets and support economic development by stimulating demand as well as supporting the economic activities of local businesses. Culture-based economic development that promotes traditional artists across real economic benefits (7).

The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, a major study of connectivity in 40 American metropolitan areas, found that Silicon Valley ranks at or near the bottom in many traditional measures of social capital, such as informal socializing, sense of community, giving, volunteering and membership in civic groups or faith-based communities (5).
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Major Trends

Decline in federal and state funding for the arts

The arts and cultural sector in the Silicon Valley is constantly challenged as well as sustained by local, national and global economic, demographic and technological trends. The decline in federal funding for major arts organizations in the mid-1980s resulted in significant cuts in fellowship programs at institutions such as the National Endowment for the Arts (4). Likewise, California’s extended fiscal crisis has led policymakers to cut funding for services not perceived to be a basic need, resulting in significant cuts to public funding for the arts and cultural sector (6).

Shifts in why the public values arts.

A 2006 report commissioned by the James Irvine Foundation on the state of the arts in California suggests that following four decades of expansion in the number and diversity of nonprofit cultural providers, the sector is facing major challenges. The report argues that funding for arts organizations derive from a blurring between the commercial and nonprofit sectors. Moving from valuing arts for their own sake, the public is shifting toward valuing the arts for their social and economic worth. Consequently, the rationale for public support for the arts has diminished, especially in California.

Changes in how art is consumed as a result of technology.

Technological advances and new communication tools are also transforming the way Americans produce and consume art and culture. New computer and television technologies (iPods, DVDs, MP3s) and new social networking practices enabled by the Internet are changing the way people experience art and build community. These technologies “allow people to curate their own artistic experiences,” and the for-profit sector is meeting the demands of these niche markets. Consequently, it is increasingly assumed that the market can provide what people want in terms of cultural experiences, leaving arts nonprofits having to justify their public value (6).

A pull on creative talent into the private sector.

Individuals from this “creative sector”—a mix of nonprofit arts and for-profit creative industries, such as fashion and filmmaking—are becoming highly desirable. People trained in the applied arts, visual arts, literary arts and media are in demand as companies race to make products engaging and artistically pleasing. Increasingly, young artists are going through the for-profit sector, or through unincorporated and informal vehicles, to present their work to the public (6, 7).

Increase in pursuit of personal creativity coupled with decrease in demand for traditional forms of professional artistic experience.

The number of people engaged in making art as “amateurs” is also rising dramatically. According to the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College, in a nation of 200 million adults, over 25 million play classical music or jazz. Over 35 million sing in choirs, opera or musicals. Over 30 million paint or draw. Over 33 million write creatively, and over 7 million compose music. A random-sample survey of over 1,000 adults in Santa Clara County found that 55 percent are active art-makers, with 31 percent painting or drawing, 10 percent playing a musical instrument, 22 percent engaging in creative writing and 19 percent participating in dance. This dramatic increase in people pursuing personal creative activity is occurring while their demand for traditional forms of nonprofit arts, such as theaters, ballets, symphonies and museums, is declining (3, 5, 6).

Regional Indicators

- Between 1995 and 2004, the number of arts organizations in the Silicon Valley increased by 54 percent (2).
- Fifteen percent of Santa Clara County residents gave their community a good rating as a place to participate with others in their favorite cultural activities (6).

Issues for Discussion

Sustainability

Adaptive capacity of traditional nonprofits.

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Audience and fund development.

There has been a 45-year push to create more nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, but not necessarily a corresponding push to generate demand for their products and revenue. Attracting and maintaining audiences becomes more critical as public funding for the arts declines (8).

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Sources
2. 2007 Silicon Valley Index: Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network. 2007.

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