



ARTSFUND

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## **ArtsFund Receives Major Grant for National Pilot Project Using Technology to Connect More People to Art, Funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

February 2012—The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded a \$570,000 grant to ArtsFund in Seattle to fund the development of an online resource to collect, manage, and publish arts and cultural information. A 12-month pilot project will be launched in Southern California, which will serve as a model resource for Seattle and other regions across the country. ArtsFund will administer the grant on behalf of Project Audience, a consortium of arts and cultural service organizations. The Southern California pilot project will test the scalability and adoption potential for other regions, and examine the possibility of a national aggregation service. In addition, the project will catalyze discussion by members of the national arts community about the value and usefulness of a shared, easy-to-use toolset for distributing arts event information.

Mari Horita, President & CEO of ArtsFund, said, “ArtsFund and Project Audience are delighted to be funded once again by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Southern California pilot project builds on several years of research and community development work by Project Audience, and we are so pleased that the Foundation recognizes the importance of our work to develop shared, open-source tools to serve and build audiences for arts and culture.”

ArtsFund’s involvement in this project is an outgrowth of the website [www.takepartinart.org](http://www.takepartinart.org). ArtsFund assumed ownership of the site in 2007 to expand arts participation and offer a primary point of connection between cultural activity and the region’s residents and visitors. In 2009, ArtsFund became a founding member of Project Audience, a collaborative effort to combine resources and ideas toward the common goal of audience development, and has acted as the fiscal agent for previous phases of work that included research, solution documentation, and planning.

### **Southern California Pilot**

Terence McFarland, Chief Executive Officer of the LA Stage Alliance and a member of the Project Audience Board of Directors serves as the Project Lead. He will work closely with Project Managers Doug Clayton, LA Stage Alliance’s Director of Programming and Operations, and Susan Chun, Program Director for Project Audience. They will partner with ExperienceLA—a consortium of Los Angeles-area municipal and civic agencies and cultural organizations—to build upon and extend the functionality of the existing ExperienceLA.com resource. To test the requirements for including content from a more diverse and

larger set of arts and culture organizations and to extend the geographic range of contributors, content partners from throughout the Southern California area have agreed to participate in the pilot project. New content contributors, representing hundreds of Southern California arts organizations, include Arts Orange County, Artsopolis, The Balboa Park Online Collaborative, and KCET (public television).

The project will kick off in the first quarter of this year with a series of meetings in Los Angeles, where the project's formal partners will meet to establish requirements and specifications for the pilot project. In keeping with Project Audience's strategy of supporting inclusive, transparent development, communication and discussion opportunities open to everyone. Later in the year, a public beta testing site will be established that will mirror the tools developed for the Southern California resource, and allow other interested communities and organizations a hands-on testing environment to experience and evaluate the toolkit.

### **About ArtsFund**

Founded in 1969 as an efficient vehicle for supporting all the arts, ArtsFund supports over 60 local arts groups, large and small, so they can provide stimulating and enlightening arts for the community. ArtsFund also serves as an advocate for the arts through programs such as Board Leadership Training, which equips current and future arts board members with knowledge and skills for effective board service; and Economic Impact Studies that show how much arts and culture contribute to the health of the region. ArtsFund serves as fiscal agent for the Cultural Resource Collective, a shared database for audience development research, and is active in other statewide advocacy efforts on behalf of the arts. ArtsFund's cash grants, capacity building and other services make arts groups stronger so they can serve the region and make it a great place to live, work, raise a family and run a business.

### **About Project Audience**

Project Audience is a consortium of arts and cultural service organizations developing collaborative, affordable, sustainable tools and strategies to help local, regional, and national-level arts service organizations encourage more people to get more involved in arts and cultural programs and activities. Project Audience's goals are to provide communities with access to easy-to-use, low-cost, web-based tools and technologies that will increase arts and culture attendance and enhance the visitor experience. By working together in a collaborative manner, organizations involved with Project Audience not only share in the development of sustainable projects, they also assist the arts and cultural community in establishing best practices and leveraging shared resources for audience development. Project Audience strives to encourage strong, new, sustainable relationships between arts and cultural organizations and audiences across the country.

Project Audience is governed by a Board of Directors and a working Oversight Committee representing five regional organizations. It is currently undergoing the process of incorporating as a 501c3 nonprofit organization and expanding its governance structure. Kelly Tweeddale (Executive Director, Seattle Opera), Autumn Ames (Executive Director, Arts and Cultural Alliance of Central Florida), and Doug Smith

(Director of Web Services, Theatre Development Fund, New York) have recently been elected as Project Audience's Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, and Treasurer.

### **About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Performing Arts Program**

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Performing Arts Program provides multi-year grants on an invitation-only basis to leading orchestras, theater companies, opera companies, modern dance companies, and presenters based in the United States. In conjunction with regular program grants, the Foundation also makes a limited number of grants to research and service organizations that are doing work closely related to program goals. Annual giving in the program has averaged approximately \$33 million since 2006.

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