



Putting the Local Arts Agency Dashboard to Work for You
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Presented by Randy Cohen, Ruby Lopez Harper, Suzan Jenkins, and Isaac Fitzsimmons

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Marissa @ AFTA (she/her): Good afternoon. Thank you all so much for being here today we're just going to wait another moment or so it's folks are joining us from the waiting room and then we'll go ahead and get started.

00:00:31.740

Marissa @ AFTA (she/her): All right, and with that let's get to it hello, and welcome to, "Putting the Local Arts Agency Dashboard to Work for You." My name is Marissa Shadburn, I'm the Field Education Coordinator with Americans for the Arts. We've got a great program planned today, and we're excited to get started. But first, some quick reminders. ArtsU is our eLearning platform offering a variety of training options to support your work in the field, you can visit us at artsu.americansforthearts.org to view upcoming events.

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And with that, I'm pleased to pass things off to Randy Cohen Vice President of research on Americans for the arts thanks, Randy.

00:02:01.710

Randy Cohen (he/him): Thank you Marissa and Thank you all for joining us today it's great to be with you, we got a really interesting our I had. Our webinar and we're going to be talking about the profile of local arts agencies dashboard and. So what we've got several speakers with you today, and some of us are on camera and some of us aren't but I'm just going to call everybody out and we can. Let ourselves

in, or not, but my two colleagues at Americans for the arts, there is Ruby Lopez Harper our Vice President of Equity and Local Arts Engagement.

And I've got Isaac Fitzsimmons there is who's our research and evaluation manager at Americans for the arts and Suzan Jenkins, CEO of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery county Maryland that's my arts council I remember I contribute, so thank you and it's so that's that's a real pleasure for me.

To so that we're all together today so we're going to talk about this dashboard is a it's kind of a starting place you know it's not just going to be one hour about the dashboard we're really talking about using you know the is a tool to make data driven decisions and the dashboard is based on our annual profile local arts agency surveys. We do that, every year, and so I'll say right out of the bat off the bat this was last year's survey, which is about 2019 it was pre pandemic, we know, things have been fluid ever since so yet even still there's a lot of really valuable relevant information in there.

And the dashboard it's you know the local arts agency that it helps us. You know, make decisions about program development and driving advocacy and and improving operations and just seeing how do we stack up against other local arts agencies that are are similar to ourselves.

Along the way here as Marissa said we'd certainly love to play stump the dashboard So if you have questions feel free to put them in because we'd love to hear from you along the way, as we sort of give, you know, make this fun and interactive for anyone everyone, we want to hear from you and then we're also just going to be interested, as will be talking about how do you collect and gather information. For yourself right we all use the data, you know where do you get yours, how do you use it um so and.

Thank you National Endowment for the Arts, this is a webinar that's accessible to everybody and that's thanks to a generous grant from the our friends at the NEA and so thank you for that.

And I want to invite back on the screen here will be popping in and out Suzan who's really going to talk about the power of local arts agency data and and she's got a great story to tell and so I'll just turn it over to you.

00:05:07.290

Suzan Jenkins: Thanks Randy and it's great to be here today. Thank you so much for having me I'm so excited to be here with you and Ruby and Isaac and Marissa because this is a subject that's really, really near and dear to my heart, local arts agency advocacy.

So for background I'm the CEO of the arts and humanities Council of Montgomery county one of the largest local arts agencies in the state of Maryland. And there are 24 counties and I am also the President of the county arts agencies of Maryland and we convene a regularly to discuss issues that are germane to all of us as local arts agencies in the state.

And so, several years ago, what I noticed is that and Montgomery county is one of the largest and fastest growing areas in the region and It was declared something that I'm not particularly fond of, but it is used federally, and that is the term majority minority and so we've seen a huge shift in demographics, in the last 20 years we've seen a huge influx.

When I first moved here I'd say about 30 years ago, perhaps, I think that the the we had about 90,000 inhabitants in Montgomery county and right now we're at 1,000,002 and so we've seen. Our 900,000 so we've seen a huge growth we've seen a diversity of growth, and we see a lot of different issues bubbling to the surface.

So when I started at my agency 13 years ago we had a very small staff and we were able to contain the work that we wanted to do in. Enabling arts and humanities organizations, artists and scholars through both grant making and both through technical assistance and professional development. We are a 501c3 organization, and so I am appointed by an independent board of directors, I also am able to then independently hire my staff, etc., but I am a non departmental agency of the county. Even as a 501c3, and so I do the work of Montgomery county government as its designated local arts agency.

So when I came on the scene about 13 years ago we seemed like we were doing fine, then we had been, then the economic downturn happened in 2008. And as we began to recover We also noticed that there were many other artists and scholars and individual arts organizations and humanities organizations popping up, however, we also realize that we just did not have the capacity to serve all of those newcomers to the table, and we really struggled with what to do, for a few years.

I eventually went to my board, and I said look, you know I need more financial support we've got to go out there, I think I need another couple hundred thousand dollars, so that I can meet the administrative demand that all of these new grantees and and need for technical assistance and program development are bringing to us. And it was a difficult conversation with the county when I was asking to add another full time or two or three full time employees.

So I had to do a few things first I had to learn what the lingo was and so rather than saying I wanted to add an F T I said look to do the work that the county has designated us to do I need additional administrative support. So I know it seems like parsing words but just being able to use the words that others used when they needed to increase their capacity was really important. But more so, what was important, is that I realized that legislators needed data in order to help them understand our conundrum and to help us make the right decision.

So we began to investigate what we might do and as Randy said right at the beginning, well, first of all Randy I can't even remember when we first met but we've known each other quite some time perhaps right when I first started, because not too long after I first started, we were involved in arts and economic prosperity study. And we perhaps met then somewhere around between 2008 and 10 and so as a result, and because we're not far apart physically. He is in Takoma Park and we're in Downtown Silver Spring Maryland I just gave him a buzz and I said Randy here's my conundrum, I really, really, really want to know how I can make my case to further administrative support so here's what I'm thinking. I look at and, at the time we were investing in the cultural data process project, and so I had a sense that there were other local arts agencies that kind of looked like me around the nation.

So I said Randy if you've got an arts agency that's an independent 501c3 that does grant making and does professional development. And it's about the same demography is ours, can you help me pull together some comparative data that I can use to make my case. Well Randy was thrilled to do that and let me just say if you've never asked him to support you with data mining I'm telling you that he is a rich resource at Americans for the arts and, and I would ask you to call on him when you believe it's appropriate so I'm going to share my screen now, because this is what Randy helped us do.

We were able to pull together this local arts agency report that gave us a lot of really great information. We stated our case we said we were and what we did. We were able to pull data from arts and economic prosperity which you see there that we knew how many jobs it's supported and what it was supporting and salary and public private investment and then we moved right down to being able to look at what are the budget comparisons with the population.

Alright, so we saw that the population was close to ours, we saw that the grants awarded we're not too far from ours, that the payroll expense up oh payroll expenditures that really made me wonder. Total expenditures oh that made me wonder full time staff Oh, how can I learn more so, we learned that we were operating with a 38% less staff, while we were providing more than 55% more in grant funding on average than our peers in our peers were in Jacksonville, Florida, Oklahoma City, Fairfax, Hartford, Connecticut, and Memphis because we we found, as I said earlier that these were like communities for several different reasons.

Oh, my so once we learned that we were operating with a with a 38% debt and staff deficiency, what does that really mean that we were serving 60,000 more residents than others that had more staff oh. What does that really mean, then, on top of it not only were we serving more people, but for goodness sake, we realized that we were serving them. With less people and our payroll expenditures were less so, how could we do more work with this situation.

This situation right here the hcm see payroll expenditures 44% lower than our peers that then translated into an opportunity for us to make a case statement about what needed to be done and that said. That rendered an additional hundred thousand dollars for us for administrative to build our administrative capacity in that fiscal year and this was. Now that I look at it, I believe this was 2014 so it was some time ago, but the power of data will never go away.

When you are able to compile the data that is germane to your organization data that people can see the connection of the dots from where you are to where you want to go the power of the data speaks for itself. And I'll tell you that legislators, that I came in contact with and that I continue to come in contact with now 13 years later, the data tells the story.

And, as I heard from my colleagues at Americans for the arts no story without data no data without story Thank you Randy Cohen. Your work and all all of my colleagues Ruby, Isaac this work of the LAA Dashboard will enable us to do this kind of advocacy as we look at what is our new normal really critical helping us proceed, thank you for the opportunity.

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Randy Cohen (he/him): Thank you, that what a great story that is and. yeah. The power of data and you just hit the messages so playing with someone told me once you know Randy without the numbers you're just another guy with an opinion.

And right, and you know you clearly demonstrated, you know here's the situation, and you know, put the data in place, and you know interesting seven years ago, assuming that has held through the various ups and downs I'm sure yeah that's been over a half million bucks since then, you know so boy one big hit has really it's been the gift that keeps on giving right.

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Suzan Jenkins: Oh yes, and I'll tell you that legislators remember this chart and so when I come to them, they say okay well where where are you on this, and so right now we have a situation where we opened up emergency grants for relief and at first, the legislators said, open up to everybody, and I said, oh no, no, no, no, I can only open it to my portfolio, because those are my babies and I have to protect that.

And the legislators said I'm sorry Suzan you have to open it up to anybody who will need it well I'll tell you that I am extremely grateful that the legislators asked me to do that because guess what I learned I have a 12% increase in demand for programming and capacity building grants from the field, so you know what that means for me oh, I need another person to help me administer this unforeseen 12% increase in demand and do you know what the county Executive has proposed in the budget at \$4,000 more so that I can meet this administrative capacity need for this year.

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Randy Cohen (he/him): that's fabulous on so many levels, thank you for sharing that and that wonderful document that Suzan shared screen on will actually be available when the when the webinars available to so you'll be able to take a look at that and see the page that you did the magic with.

Ruby. There somewhere um so I wonderful colleague Ruby and Americans for the arts has not always been at Americans for the arts, unlike me, you know, like started middle school in there, I wasn't Americans for the arts I'm a Ruby I used to run fantastic and innovative programs at the greater Columbus Arts Council and has a fabulous story before that, but um you know, I was interested in we've talked of how you gather data and what kind of information you collected the dashboard, this is an icicle come up after all this enough, is a second year of the dashboard you know before that we had some internal databases, and so what did we all do before dashboards.

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Ruby Lopez Harper: slanted we all do before dashboards oh my gosh yeah so as we were preparing for this particular panel and really trying to put some framing around the usefulness, it can be really daunting it can be really.

I think, just a lot of information to get your head around, but you know, by comparison, when I was in Columbus I was working at the local arts agency there and, at the time, so this is five almost now 15 years ago. And we were one of the most studied cities, you know Columbus is known for being one of the test market cities for the country.

And at the time we were looking at us all of the studies have compiled list of about 20 benchmark cities, so this study, said that group this study said this other group this other group wants us to look at these cities, and I think because of our kind of every person.

You know persona it we really looked and were able to kind of scan across all of these cities so 20 cities, I walk around used to walk around with a binder under my arm a tab for every city and you know, when an independent, we did all the research, I went to their website I documented their staff size, I pulled their annual report I printed out their guidelines, I documented all of the programming that aligned with the things that we were doing in Columbus and made note of the things that we weren't doing that might be of interest of inspiration.

And when you're doing that for 20 cities, you know the initial input was about an hour per city sometimes two or three depending on how an expansive their work was having to determine which things fit for then and which things didn't fit and And then to also be knowledgeable around that it's about it's about a three week investment of time and then it was a constant examination.

And you know when I think back to where we were very manual very you know low-fi I like to call it. I think about the dashboard now and just how much more efficient, it is to allow organizations to benchmark themselves within the system itself that you can pick different indicators and you know as it's going to take us through some scenarios, but you know the ease with which you can both you know kind of populate your benchmark group but also explore what other cities might be doing that aren't on your radar I think is really interesting.

And you know, the thing that that set up for me over time, that is still a value is that it puts into practice that curiosity and exploration around really digesting the knowledge that we have that it isn't enough, you know, for us to really be effective case makers and effective advocates and champions knowledgeable experts to our communities and in support of the work that our agencies are doing.

We really have to be able to internalize and process all that information and I don't know about a lot of people I'm one of those folks that like numbers go in this year and other numbers fall out of this one, so you know to be able to have a place where you can quick reference and have at your fingertips access to information that's real time, and that is current.

You know, with a lot of the work that I was doing manually This stated information and I was really at the mercy of what organizations were populating on their websites real time in terms of their process, so there might be a lag in how current their guidelines are there might be a lag and how current there you know.

You know annual reports are but you know with the dashboard we're really getting the meat of the information that I had to go dig for and so. You know I often tell folks like familiarize yourself regularly and and use these tools use them if you use them, they become part of your practice. And you know you then know where to go to get what things that are quick that you need to access instead of calling a colleague waiting for someone to call you back or when and hoping that information for an on somebody's website so you know for me that's really been I think the most exciting development coming out of the dashboard in addition to just having A repository of you know snapshots from around the country it's really so helpful from an administrative perspective and advocacy perspective and then knowledge building and a practice building.

So you know that's that that's some of the exciting stuff that I wanted to share with everyone today.

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Randy Cohen (he/him): Excellent thanks for think we. Maybe after Isaac shows us some demonstrations it'd be interesting to hear a little bit more about where did you find your 20 cities, they just picture you working your way around Columbus with your big binder like I got an answer for that, but I'll say I get so many calls from people who are like wow we got an opportunity to create this new program and my city manager says that sounds good.

If you can find three other places like us that are doing it and it sounds so school yard right, but you know nobody's like really wants to be the first one out of the gate but you find some similar communities yeah sure.

00:23:30.840

Ruby Lopez Harper: yeah no, and that makes it so much easier, especially when you're thinking about how. I mean let's be honest everybody wants to be the belle of the ball and everybody wants to be the first out of the gate. So, to be able to quickly access who else is doing this within really specific demography right, I mean some of the some of the the cities that had been identified were identified out of different assessments aspiration, so you know there were larger cities smaller cities but you know, to really be able to get into the sweet spot of who else is doing this and with what asante I so some of the things that I couldn't get to on my own through my own research were were things like budget allocations, or you know different You know the specific staffing or some of the specific ordinance or some of the specific you know make ups of certain things that that we can get to in a faster way with the dashboard um you know that the the 20 cities weren't weren't by design even, I think.

You know, across all of the things that I was looking at word similar that's why it was 20 it, you know, it was this wolf brown study said these 10 the city in there, I think, at the time was you know Columbus 2020 it was the it was the centennial celebration I don't remember 200. And you know, these were the 10 cities, they wanted to look at, but this didn't actually line up, and so there was like one or two that matched and then we had to kind of keep going at it and then there were also just to where the peers that had similar grant budgets as us now, it was really a big skewed list as far as you know, the population size and and the size of the organization and how they were funded, I mean there's so many pieces and parts that were really hard to get to and took that time that are now just part of the dashboard so it's it's really exciting.

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Randy Cohen (he/him): Good. All right, so speaking of dashboard you know we're we're 26 minutes into this thing we haven't even seen it yet so Isaac. would love to hear talking. Show us give us some DEMO of the dashboard yeah I was just trying to think of some questions you know, like, how do we place stump Isaac in the dashboard.

You know, I was interested as Suzan was talking about, you know the pandemic and some equity Policies and some of those kind of things and I know there's some of that in the dashboard a little bit about DEI

related policies and local arts agencies. What everyone want to show us some of what's in there, and you can give us some background to you know, if you like.

00:26:30.240

Isaac Fitzsimons (he/him): or so I'm going to share my screen. Okay, so you should all see the dashboard now and, before I begin I want to say that sometimes with technology I love, how you really uses lo fi sometimes with high fight technology.

It can be scary to kind of dive into it, because you think you might break something. I just want to say it's actually really difficult for the end user to break the dashboard. But to start off I'm going to try to break it in fact I am going to break it because it's been sitting for a while, so it's been idling and it's going to need a refresh so I'm going to refresh the page first. And it's going to take a while to load.

And so I'll tell you a bit about the dashboard, so I think Randy said in his intro that includes the data from two years of our profile of local arts agencies and I apologize my screen is this way so you're going to get my profile, it is my better side just for you so enjoy that.

So it contains years from two years of data from data from two years of our survey and I was released in this summer, this past summer that just happened.

And so, before we dive into some questions I'm going to show you how you can break it so I'm going to go into full screen first because it's easier and avoid some of the scroll of it, otherwise happens so one way to break it is to use a lot of filters. So I'm clicking the show filters button up here and you're going to see it's going to take some time.

While the filters load, this is normal, there is so much data in this dashboard that it can be a bit slow sometimes but it wasn't actually that slow so here it is. We have you can filter by la name, you can filter by legal status, you can filter by budget size so I'm just going to do, legal status first and you should see that the questions have changed, based on the filters.

Another way that you can break it and let's see if I can do it sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't if I click on one, you can see, keep only and exclude pop up so if I do exclude. It gets rid of that data point. The way to get it back is just to go down to here and it's an undo button, if you really make a mess of things you can click the reset button here so I'm just going to do undo and it's going to take us back to how it was before again if I click sometimes it doesn't work, the second time.

And looks like it's not going to work, the second time, but the same thing will pop up and it's going to be exclude or keep only, and if you could keep only then, again, you can just reset the dashboard and it will take you back to the beginning.

So again, those are like that's, the only way that you can break it, otherwise I encourage you to kind of play around with it. And Marissa put in the chat that I did a video about the nitty gritty and how to use the dashboard. And that's about eight minutes long it's in the link, so I encourage you to watch it if you want to see more about the features and I will be explaining what I'm doing as I go along, but that other video gives you it kind of goes into more depth.

So I think Randy's question was about the Ai so I'm going to get rid of that first I'm going to hide the filters and go back to the main page. So if you scroll down the easiest way to find your way around is to look at the the tabs and so these tabs correspond to different sections of the survey and we have a tab here, that is for diversity equity and inclusion so I'm going to click it, it's going to take some time to load because there's just a lot of data into it, but again that's not that's not that much time.

So we asked to certainly track trends about diversity of the following groups and hear the responses to that, but I'm interested in a statement, whether the las have a statement on diversity equity inclusion that is question for you in this right here, so we can see that 31% of MBAs who responded to the 2019 profile develop their own statement if I hover over, you can see more information in the tool tip.

You see 12% adhere to a statement that was adopted by their parent organization 6% have statement adopted by another organization 22% don't have it currently but are working on one and 32% do not have a statement.

So Randy can you give me more information about what you're looking for, I think that answers all the questions.

00:31:17.400

Randy Cohen (he/him): um yeah. Let's see um I'm trying to remember, if we can use the filters, from this point, or do we got to go around the other way to see who's a local arts agency, like me, that may have already adopted a statement or something. Of that yeah sure.

00:31:36.720

Isaac Fitzsimons (he/him): What so what I can tell you one thing, so if you want to kind of get the filter down to drill into more about demographics, or if he if he would pull up the call. Ever gonna ask our audience a question so I'm asking Where are you calling in from today, bring the view by story calling you from the Midwest north east, south or West to leave it up for a few seconds, while you mentor it. And whenever ready for the results.

So looks like we have 36% are calling in from the Midwest so great so I'm going to go back to the filters I'm going to go to region and I'm going to choose Midwest. So that gets you closer, so you can see that this is only the organizations who are from the Midwest answering and you can see the responses.

Now Randy second question about whether or not you can get the names of the names of LAA's. We can't currently do that on the dashboard that's one of the limitations, so we could use the La names as filters themselves, so I can click here. And here here's lots of LAA's who participated in the 2019 profile, but I can't do it the opposite rounds like a other way round, so I can't, for example, click. On the 29% and I know that there are 37 organizations, because 37 but I can't tell you who those 37 are, and the reason for that is because I would have to make each question a filter itself, and that would make the dashboard they go much more slower. But an alternative is I'm going to hide my filters here. Because it's always good to work around.

Yeah and well when I saw the question I was like, how can I do it, and I was like wait no the webinars in two hours don't mess it up, but I'm always interested in how I can make it better and how I can make it work better, for you, so if there are things that you are interested please email me, let me know and I'll see what I can do also use tableau to build the dashboard and tableau is always updating their products, so there are always new features that we can add.

So I'm gonna go to the participant map. And our star filter for region is still active, as you can see here all the Ladies in the Midwest who enter to the survey, and I can scroll down, and I can just choose one. So I'll do Arts and Bartlett because that is an A I'm going to go back to actually know what I do hi filters I'm gonna go back to my page and then show filters again I can go to arts and bartlett I can find it.

and other thing I was thinking of as I was preparing for this was if I could do a dude type typing in the name, because I would be a lot easier. But with this type of filter, you can either search it completely without would get rid of all this stuff that le a's and I think that's important so unfortunately tough to kind of. Trust that you know your alphabet so I can go to question 40 and I can see arts and bartlett does not have a statement at all.

So that's something that you can do with the dashboard for DEI and while we're on the topic of DEI there is another question that we asked I'm just gonna get rid of everybody a good one, you know,

00:35:30.690

Randy Cohen (he/him): and while you're pulling that up I'll say we haven't become total robots yet so when you go through there, and if you remember, one of the roles that Isaac I clicked on it gave a number of 37 had answered in the affirmative on that just reach out to us give us a call you know we can also do. We still know how to do our you know with our own hands and brains, and so we have a completely turned ourselves over to the to the computer and so that that would be a way to say oh right yeah sure we'll get you we can get you those folks so you can.

00:36:06.180

Isaac Fitzsimons (he/him): yeah absolutely we have all the data and we're always available to answer your questions on it.

So here's Another scenario where we talk about D is in a different section that's called looking to the future. So question 58 how strongly do agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your la and one of the statements that we asked was I la has an appropriate level of diversity among staff board, commission to volunteers, so if you trick that I learned today actually while preparing for this was that if you click on one, and then you can control click on the other.

And so, this is strongly agree this is somewhat agree it's like it's scale neutral somewhat disagree and then strongly disagree, So I'm missing to look for the ones who say agree so I'm going to click on one I'm going to control click on somewhat agree. and, obviously, you can do the math in your head, but if you don't want to you can see that tableaux does it for you, so we are about 40 40% agree so less than half.

But maybe you want to compare to previous years, so this is two years of data I'm going to be adding the 2020 data shortly we did a shorter version of the of the profile for 2020 focusing a lot on coven because that was that's tough on everybody's minds and also racial equity as well. But so if I go here and so click show past survey years I'm going to click 2018. And then the darker bars pop up and that is the 2018 responses so again, I can click there control click.

Here it's a bit finicky. And then I see that's 45%.

Of the 2018 so the number has increased from 2018 to 2019 of people are led to believe that their LAA has appropriate level of diversity among the staff board and volunteers.

So that is one question I don't know ready, if you have any questions.

00:38:13.620

Randy Cohen (he/him): um you know what actually I maybe I was thinking I'm jumping from this because you know this is this is one fabulous dashboard. But you know when you're looking for additional data to compliment. You know the survey data, you know so all right, well, maybe now we know how. Our local arts agencies, how I'm stacking up to other local arts agencies and what we also wanted to do is show you how there's a bunch of other great resources. That you know, taken together, you know we're going to be more than the sum of their parts here.

So I'm going to take a turn and share my screen and click and now I actually noticed that I cheated on this by going ahead, already so we're going to start um so just you know, building on that great search and thank you for that Isaac and showing us a lot of the different ways to access use the data. has some of the different questions interrelate say you just want to learn more about that this issue are many issues we have our arts and social impact explorer. Which sort of we affectionately least I do internally call the the pinwheel, why do we call it a pin we all will look at the things spin around so you know there's all these different areas that there's tourism now I was actually going to show the other is diversity access so I'm here you'll find, not just the local arts agency data, but you know broader data sets and a little snapshot of what it is and some additional data points and then you know you click more learn more and there's going to be some examples there's a there's a fact sheets here in the upper right you could click that and so it's a way to get more I get some more context to your data question, let me see if I can get out of that.

Let's see, this is a little trickier here.

Okay, and then I just wanted to show you two other ones real quick, we were going to do some economic related searches and tourism, but, you know so in public in partnerships local arts agencies, you know so many of them partner over 90% have different partnerships with different government agencies or nonprofit organizations in the Community about three quarters of them have three or more partnerships with economic development, social service health tourism and so just wanted to show a couple of those other pieces.

Here's a really great one heard Suzan talk about arts and economic prosperity which McHenry county has done several of those studies for. So say you were using the dashboard and and maybe your accounting manager says hey what's our budget again and what's the economic impact of that budget

you're like oh man I didn't do any economic impact study I'll do the next one. And you could go to op so how I got there, this is our arts and economic prosperity five page.

And here's the ap five calculator so if you're one of 341 communities that was a P five you've got your own study, but you know there's 10s of thousands of cities and, and this is really simple all you do is you pick one of a group of population categories and you put in an expense figure say I've got that size community, and I have a \$4 million budget. I do 4 million or 400,000 I can, and then maybe an attendance figure like well if you have one yeah we do events and we have 36,000 people attend those events and you and you simply click calculate and all of these figures populate here with impact on jobs and household income and local and state government revenue.

So that's that's again like the dashboard This is just one of these tools just there at the ready and then there's another really popular one that we have for folks and that's creative industries. A lot of talk about creative economy. This is these reports creative industries, business and employment in the arts and may have seen these in the past and.

So I got to the creative industries page there's all kinds of information here, defining the creative industries, but say you want like look I just need to find my creative industries report. So you click there and now here's a map of the US and Suzan let's do you and McHenry county, since this is where we are and so I'll click on Maryland and for every state you're going to see here's our two us senators here's all our congressional districts here's all the counties here's all the state legislative districts there's 11,000 of these reports on the website here. Montgomery Montgomery county and poof here's my county, this is what we look like folks I'm right about over there Suzan's offices right about there Ruby's right about here so.

Anyway, so these are just some tools that are available as a way to perhaps enhance, enhance your data undertaking so.

Let's see some Andrew asked which local arts agencies are set the questionnaire each year, so we send and everybody can kind of come back on well, we can finish up here with some conversation and we'd love to hear from you, if you have any more questions.

We send the survey out to several thousand local arts agencies every year and we running about 600 responses, a year, which is a pretty good number we'd certainly love to do more than that. So if you feel like you haven't gotten one certainly feel free to shoot Isaac me or any of us really an email will make sure we've got the you're on the proper list of everything to be part of that and there's so. So thank you, that was really interesting presentations.

You know, I was really struck by rubies conversation about you know her binder in the 20 communities, and I wonder I'm, Suzan if you do, you have like a set of places that you're comparing yourself to does your you know county manager your economic development, people say like these are the people I always want to know about.

00:45:21.150

Suzan Jenkins: Well, you know I don't I don't know who's in the webinar so I want to be cautious but I tell you that what's clear to me is that we are the content experts. And so we go to the city managers and we say here, is where we should here is the comparative community that you should be looking at.

So if you're looking at that, let me tell you how we are or aren't similar and that's really been helpful, you know I'll share once again quickly that this can you see this now. Yes, yeah here when we were able to look at these Jacksonville or or Oklahoma City or Fairfax because everybody in Montgomery county always talks about well in Fairfax they do, and for those of us in the region, you know that there's this competition and then Hartford Connecticut and Memphis we try to look at cities like I said with you know similar demographics, so what I've seen is that sometimes they might come up and say well in.

I don't know Queens they're not doing well Queens and I are not particularly similar in some of the things that I'm comparing for this, so I think it's really important and what I love about the dashboard is that, unlike movie I don't have to have binders full of cities. I can just go to the dashboard and go there and begin to ask some of those questions that really if you're at a local, you are, you have an intuition about what really is similar and dissimilar.

And so I think that just being able to get this all in one place, and then to and then, when you see the data come up you're like oh that doesn't know that's not right and then you're able to really do it in ways that are so customized. And that's really The key to this if you're gonna make this data based argument. I would say that what I've learned is to customize the data, so that you and others can poke holes in it and say is this really similar is it so that when you go to the legislators, or whoever it is that has their hands on your purse whether it's legislators or you know or or potential donors, or whatever you're giving them new information that is believable to them that's really important to you may have a whole lot of data you think is germane to you, but when you're sharing the data help them understand why it's germane to you and how it actually can fit.

And I just wanted to say one more thing if anybody has looked at some of the dates that have come up when we've been clicking on either my report or or Randy's 20 1720 1420 1618, friends that doesn't matter what Ruby said matters, and that is the practice of data mining it's not something that you can just get down and dirty in five minutes.

This report that I've shown you took us several weeks white right Randy because we kept going back and forth well. This community has this but not that okay don't don't include that one this one this but not that don't include that include this not that what makes the argument so just know that the the practice of it gives you a facility. With language and an understanding about data that helps you do that trading that Ruby did in her binder because she had to learn that she had this giant binder but if she wasn't giving the germane data information for the right question. It was meaningless, so I know it sounds like a lot but Ruby you want to talk a little bit about how I wondering if you might want to talk to how people can figure it out.

00:49:23.700

Ruby Lopez Harper: yeah and I think you know one the nice thing about the dashboard so you know, I was working again in you know, almost a decade ago access technology completely different place but you know, the thing with the dashboard as well, is that you can start with your demographics, so I had several reports that I could point. you've got you know different conversations and other comparisons that anecdotally you can point to, but some folks may not have that and I think that's one of the things that the dashboard is also helpful with is you can punch in some basic comparison you know demography right that, like you want this type of organizational setup so are you a 501c3 or you would have city department. You can type in this kind of budget that lets you close, but even if you don't have sources to point to comparison cities, the dashboard is going to be able to give that and build that with you.

And then you know it's picking up the phone and asking some more questions or showing that to your colleagues and saying to these cities resonate with you here's what you see you know just an initial scan.

And then, again, the practice of doing this, you know data mining this this familiarizing understanding, where to go to grab the information that you need you know, then it's you pull the La profile one page do you pull. From the creative industry report do you pull from the salary survey, do you pull from. Even the AEP five calculator is helpful because I think in all of these instances the dashboard is your entry point the dashboard is your you know your ground setting and then all the reporting tools and resources amplify augment provide additional compliment to.

The The thing that you're trying to get across to folks I know even in the time that I've been with inside after right, so I was in the field from 2006 until 2016 when I started with the organization and being able to pull summary information was so helpful because, you know, I was at the time trying to make the case for why public art should be assigned to the grants and services department and to be able to say well look other arts agencies have robust public art, you know programming, I'm not even asking for that I'm just asking, can we have this as an area where someone is assigned to pay attention and to focus, so that we can grow. And look how these other pure the dominant your city right, because then you can even prioritize I'm not saying anybody should have 20 cities that was nuts, but.

Of those 20 cities, I could find the five or six people wanted to pay attention to. It still meant that I had to be knowledgeable enough to say Oh well, but then you know this other city over here is doing this really amazing thing I think we can adapt it. And you know, and these five cities that we watch all the time aren't even doing that, so you know you still have to again develop that muscle to be able to think and examine and and pull inspiration and be able to also combine that with your strategy and your vision to say what five years from now, I want us to be able to do with this other studies, and so, let me keep an eye on what they've got going on and how they report in.

The other thing that I loved about the dashboard to is that it can get you to some really specific information so if you drill in and you find that there's. Three organizations and a have equity policies that are guiding or you know that have formal statement. You can get to them, and you can you can contact them and connect with them, you can figure out they're not so anonymized that you know, in the way that they are and some other systems that I think we've used over the last decade. They're not so anonymized that you can't get to that and that was one of the elements that I think has been really thoughtful about the way the dashboards construct is that. Everyone reporting in is acknowledging that

all of this is public information so you can get to the organization and and get to the granular stuff that you can connect with your colleagues and say I noticed, all of this stuff in the dashboard I'm thinking about these things, how is that working out for you, but again without developing that muscle any of those subsequent steps are just that much harder to take.

00:53:59.100

Randy Cohen (he/him): that's such a great point I'm your host remind me of our colleague Nina who leads so much of our advocacy work and it's you know. If there's a big bill, you know don't make that meeting don't let that meeting, be your first meeting you know I mean you sort of you know, building a relationship with your legislator, building a relationship with the research and just sort I love the way you talk about sort of strengthening that curiosity muscle and you know, because when you need it.

So Suzan if you know if we hadn't done any of this work in advance that three weeks would have been three months but boy, you were right there on the spot, with it, so it was it was effective.

00:54:39.450

Suzan Jenkins: I think what you said about, you know, knowing what data works, where that's really important, but you can't know that if you're not familiar with the different tools, so the report that I showed, it has the strength of the create it is an amalgam of strength of the creative economy economic prosperity cultural data project because it was 2014 and I was participating at that time and the La census, on which the dashboard was built teams, so when I needed to know.

What I didn't know in order to fill in the blanks and then it was like oh that data can come from here, and here, what would they care about who else is doing it. What is their what's their demand, how do I know that you're just not saying you want more friends in your agency, how do I really know that the demand is there this gave me the opportunity to pull all that data together to create my case statement.

00:55:49.950

Randy Cohen (he/him): perfect illustration of this session today we're down to the last couple minutes anybody like to offer any final thoughts or words.

00:56:00.090

Suzan Jenkins: don't be afraid of data, it can be our very best friend.

00:56:05.460

Ruby Lopez Harper: stole it. Because it's true right don't be afraid. Make it part of your day make it part of your week make it part of your month but schedule an hour here there somewhere that is a regular

time for you, to step away and just explore and and and revel in the discovery, because when you're able to do that again you're just building that muscle memory and you're just adding to your practice so if you can do it that's The thing that I would highly recommend yes. Isaac.

00:56:42.030

Isaac Fitzsimons (he/him): A thing I know I think they both took the words out of my mouth. And I'd say poke around in the dashboard. Like I said you're not going to break anything, there are other things that I didn't show you there's a whole second set of filters that can pop up if you want to compare population size, population size and you can see it visually so poke around on it play around with it worst that's gonna happen to that it's going to go very slow and you'll have to refresh the page.

00:57:07.410

Ruby Lopez Harper: Oh, my gosh and don't be shy right like we're here to help.

00:57:10.560

Isaac Fitzsimons (he/him): yeah.

00:57:10.980

Randy Cohen (he/him): Yes, I knew exactly what the data be. You know, be familiar with the data be familiar with this, you know we're here for you all the time, too, and great thoughts and and really you know. The data it's not the end of the conversation it's the beginning of the conversation, you know you're going to ask these questions and you're going to come up with some solutions and it just gives you a place to move forward to bring others in and well, this has been really interesting.

Thank you, everybody Suzan, Ruby, Isaac Thank you to those joining us today to talk about the dashboard and data and that the practice and the habit of data I love that I'm kind of inspired inspired by this, you know, so this is great, so let me turn it back to you take us home.

00:58:00.900

Marissa @ AFTA (she/her): Thank you Randy, Isaac, Ruby, Suzan and Thank you everyone that attended today's activity, "Putting the Local Arts Agency Dashboard to Work For You." Big thank you to the National Endowment for the Arts for funding this program. This was recorded and will be available for replay. And we encourage you to share this with everyone you know. It will be it will continue to be free so thanks so much again and have a fantastic rest of your day.