



AN EVALUATION
OF THE
MID-SIZED PRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS INITIATIVE
FOR THE
NONPROFIT FINANCE FUND

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2010, the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) contracted with WolfBrown to conduct an evaluation of the Mid-Sized Presenting Organizations Initiative (MPO), a four-year program of grants, technical assistance, and convenings funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) that ended in 2009. The goals of the program were “...to strengthen some of the nation’s best mid-sized presenting organizations as they navigate accelerated changes in cultural production and consumption...[and] to sustain or increase opportunities for artists to create and perform their work...” Central to MPO’s rationale, as developed in 2004, is the understanding that presenters with annual budgets of between \$500,000 and \$3 million often face problems that their larger- and smaller-budgeted colleague organizations do not.

This evaluation, which was conducted between January and September 2010, assesses whether participants’ financial stability was maintained or improved and whether opportunities for artists were sustained or increased. It further considers participants’ degree of success in accomplishing the goals they established at the program’s outset. It also examines the effectiveness of the MPO program design, assessing each of its key components – annual grants, technical assistance, and the periodic convenings.

To complete the evaluation, the consultants conducted a detailed review of materials, performed a series of over 50 interviews with MPO participants and others, and reviewed an “audit scan” conducted by NFF at the close of the Initiative.

Overall, both the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the MPO Initiative has been successful in meeting key goals mentioned above. A moderate increase in key measures (including the total amount paid to artists, total number of performances, and total audience size) indicates that a degree of success was achieved in increasing opportunities for artists to create or perform work. **Considering the deterioration of the national economy over the course of the Initiative, this modest**



improvement is particularly noteworthy. The qualitative data indicates an even greater degree of success with respect to the goals of the Initiative.

Among the other key findings of this evaluation are the following:

- ➔ The design of this Initiative followed an exemplary and thoughtful course. In the implementation of the Initiative, both NFF and DDCF demonstrated valuable and on-going flexibility around delivering program services in ways that went beyond the initial program design. The procedures implemented by NFF made for a generally smooth experience for applicants and grantees.
- ➔ The application review process provided panelists with a substantial body of data, although having a panel that included more individuals skilled at reviewing and interpreting financial data might have made the review process even more insightful.
- ➔ Generally, the groups were successful in addressing the challenges that their work plans were designed to meet, although not always in the ways outlined in their initial proposal.
- ➔ The MPO groups showed a modest improvement in their financial health over the course of the Initiative, although the declining economy caused their improvements to be less pronounced than would otherwise have been the case.
- ➔ While the consultant assistance aspect of the overall technical assistance component created the greatest confusion for MPO participants, it was highly valued, as was NFF's flexibility in how it was implemented. The Nonprofit Business Analysis was also highly valued by participants. The "Tools for Tough Times" modules, offered to participants as the economy declined, were valued by those groups that chose to use them.
- ➔ The convenings were a subsidiary but important component of the project. While important, however, the utility of the convenings in



furthering the specific goals of the Initiative was less clearly articulated by interviewees.

In the final section of the report, the consultants raise and briefly address some general questions about program evaluation, including whether the results were as good as should have been expected, whether target organizations fared better than their peers, and whether techniques and methods chosen were in fact the best way to address the goals of the program, especially given the volatility of the environment. The answers provided offer additional considerations for an on-going dialogue on evaluation.



PART I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In January 2010, the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) contracted with WolfBrown to conduct an evaluation of the Mid-Sized Presenting Organizations Initiative (MPO), a four-year program of grants, technical assistance, and convenings funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) that ended in 2009. The goal of the program was “...to strengthen some of the nation’s best mid-sized presenting organizations as they navigate accelerated changes in cultural production and consumption...[and] to sustain or increase opportunities for artists to create and perform their work...”¹ Seventeen organizations were selected to participate in this program.

Central to MPO’s rationale, as developed in 2004, is the understanding that presenters with annual budgets of between \$500,000 and \$3 million often face problems that their larger- and smaller-budgeted colleague organizations do not. In particular, they lack the flexibility exhibited by many smaller presenters and do not have the financial or structural stability of many larger presenting organizations. This adds to the challenges the sector as a whole is facing – changing priorities among audience members, shifts in patterns of public and private funding, and increased competition from commercial entertainment, as well as an array of new media opportunities and outlets.

This evaluation, which was conducted between January and September 2010, assesses participants’ degree of success in accomplishing the goals they established at the program’s outset. Specifically, it considers whether opportunities for artists were sustained or increased and whether financial stability was maintained or improved. The evaluation also examines the effectiveness of the MPO program design, assessing each of its key components – annual grants, technical assistance (including consultant assistance, the Nonprofit Business Analysis, and NFF’s “Tools for Tough Times” assistance modules), and the periodic convenings.

Among the key tasks conducted as part of this assessment were the following:

- ➔ A detailed materials review of information provided to NFF by participating organizations over the four-year course of the Initiative and NFF-generated materials, including initial applications, work plans, progress reports to NFF, NFF’s Nonprofit Business Analyses, confidential status reports from technical assistance providers, and selected performance-related non-financial metrics, among other information.

¹ MPO Initiative program guidelines, Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2005, pages 1 and 2.



- ➔ An audit scan for each of the participating groups, conducted by NFF at the completion of the Initiative, to assess their financial condition at that time compared to 2005, the year before the program began. The scan looked at trends in growth, profitability, and liquidity to provide insights about the overall health of the participants.
- ➔ A series of 43 confidential telephone interviews with two to four representatives of each of the participating organizations (including key staff and board members).
- ➔ An additional series of ten interviews with selected technical assistance providers, current and former NFF and DDCF staff, as well as several individuals involved in research surrounding the initial MPO program design.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Time and again during this evaluation, the consultants have noted two overarching considerations that temper their findings:

1. The MPO initiative involved a relatively small number of organizations.
2. It occurred during a challenging time of national economic upheaval and transformation.

While this evaluation provides important context and valuable findings for understanding the impact of the Initiative, it is important to remember that these uncontrollable factors limit the ability to generalize from these findings to the larger universe of mid-sized presenters. In addition, in some instances interviewees were asked to recall activities, situations, or decisions from over five years ago. Their memories were not always clear or complete and the analysis attempts to take this into consideration.

The consultants' review of the information submitted by the participating organizations has been extensive. When appropriate, they have used available metrics provided by the groups in their assessment of the success of the Initiative, as well as the detailed information provided in NFF's audit scans. Many of the consultants' findings, however, are derived from their qualitative research and are based on the confidential interviews with organizational participants and others involved in the Initiative. The consultants believe this mix of quantitative and qualitative data sources has resulted in a detailed and reliable assessment of the MPO Initiative.



CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

This report is organized into several sections:

- ➔ **Part I: Introduction** provides background and context about the MPO Initiative and this evaluation.
- ➔ **Part II: MPO Initiative Concept, Design, and Process** offers details about the Initiative.
- ➔ **Part III: Evaluation** presents the consultants' assessment of the three program components and the program design.
- ➔ **Part IV: Evaluation Questions and Implications** provides the consultants' perspective on the broader topic of evaluation of grants programs and how to maximize their effectiveness.

In addition, an appendix is provided that lists the individuals who participated in confidential interviews.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The consultants want to acknowledge the assistance of the staff and board members of MPO organizations and all the others who participated in the interview process. They were generous with their time and worked hard to recall details of their involvement in the Initiative that were, in some cases, five or six years in the past. Without their assistance – and the on-going involvement of senior staff at NFF and DDCF – this evaluation would not have been possible.



PART II

MPO INITIATIVE CONCEPT, DESIGN, AND PROCESS

PROGRAM CONCEPT AND DESIGN

The Mid-Sized Presenting Organizations Initiative (MPO), funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) and implemented by the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), provided funds, customized technical assistance, and convenings over four years to seventeen mid-sized performing arts presenting organizations with budgets ranging from \$500,000 to \$3,000,000. The goals of the program were articulated clearly in the MPO Guidelines. They were to assist participating organizations to:

- ➔ Sustain or increase opportunities for artists to create and perform their work
- ➔ Meet organizational long-term goals and the goals for this Initiative
- ➔ Maintain or improve organizational financial health.

The design of the Initiative was informed by research into the needs of mid-sized presenting organizations, which had been identified as facing a particularly difficult situation. A key question that was being asked by program designers was whether a workable strategy could be developed that would assist these organizations in “reinventing” themselves so that their planning and operations focused as much on a financial point of view as a programming one.

Research was undertaken by two consulting firms. LarsonAllen performed a literature review of grant-making strategies relevant to the Initiative and AEA Consulting conducted research on significant trends affecting the future course of mid-sized presenting organizations. Their final report identified challenges and opportunities these organizations faced and outlined strategies the Initiative might employ to address them. The findings were reviewed by senior planners at DDCF and NFF and were used to inform a focus group session involving eleven national field leaders convened to gather additional feedback.

The initial concept and general design of MPO was also informed by the experience of earlier DDCF grants programs, most notably the JazzNet initiative, which was also implemented by NFF. Among the differences between JazzNet and MPO was a shift away from giving priority to building endowment, which was a key component of JazzNet, and building in greater flexibility to the technical assistance arrangements in MPO to better address participants’ shifting needs.

The original program design called for **four annual grants** of between \$100,000 and \$200,000 (although these were later scaled back to annual grants of between \$90,000 and



\$125,000). In addition to this grant, participating organizations received, at the outset of the Initiative, a Nonprofit Business Analysis (NBA), designed “... to use a financial lens to help clients understand how financial history and business structure can inform future plans and decisions,”² and an average of about \$57,000 of **technical assistance**. The technical assistance was tailored to the participants’ needs as articulated in their applications, and included an NBA Update – an annual financial assessment conducted by NFF. In addition, each participating organization was assigned a consultant with whom they worked over the course of the four years of the Initiative.

The third component of the Initiative was an **annual convening** of the leadership of the participating groups (including the executive director, another staff member, and a senior member of the board). Convenings were designed to foster peer learning and networking.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The design of this Initiative followed an exemplary and thoughtful course. It included extensive research and feedback from leaders of the presenting field. The program design was innovative for its time in that it coupled technical assistance and convenings with annual grants and spanned multiple years. The design benefited from the research and the willingness of designers to take into account past experience and feedback and modify program components accordingly.

Both NFF and DDCF demonstrated valuable and on-going flexibility around delivering program services in ways that went beyond the initial program design. An excellent example of that flexibility was NFF’s response to the economic downturn or other challenging situations. NFF usually responded positively to participants’ requests to use technical assistance funds to cover specific and critical needs that could be addressed by outside consultants. In addition, NFF developed a set of “Tools for Tough Times” that were offered to MPO participants in lieu of other consulting services and these Tools were highly valued by the groups, as reported in detail later in this report.

It is an open question whether the size of the grants, even before they were modified downward to accommodate the larger cohort, were sufficiently large to make it possible for grantees to show permanent positive change in their organizations. While the grants were substantial, especially for this cohort, making the sorts of systemic changes envisioned in the initial program design and at the heart of NFF’s methodology may well require more money (and more time) to ensure that change is firmly rooted in the organization. That said, the MPO Initiative represents a major investment in a segment of the presenting field that is often overlooked and that investment appears to have paid off, as will be seen in later sections of this report.

² Introduction to PowerPoint version of Nonprofit Business Analysis report, Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2005, slide #3.



SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process was a two-tiered one. First, potential applicants were asked to submit an “Intent to Apply,” providing programmatic information and answering several other questions about the organization. About 240 applications were received, of which 177 (those that met the program guidelines) were forwarded to a peer review panel. The panel was charged with identifying a maximum of 25 organizations, based on their artistic excellence and self-reported information on their financial condition and organizational culture. These groups were asked to submit a full proposal and were awarded a small grant of \$2,000 to help defray the costs of completing the proposal. Three types of grant requests for strategic assistance were to be considered, including:

- **Environmental Challenge** – The organization is confronting external trends, such as competitive market forces, that may require it to fundamentally change its underlying business model to stabilize and adapt to a new environment.
- **Growth Opportunity** – The organization is poised to expand its capacity and is considering, for example, a market study or facility project.
- **Operational Sustainability** – The organization, in an effort to sustain its capacity, seeks to enhance its operations by, for example, developing a cash reserve, improving the efficiencies of its administrative and financial reporting systems and/or developing its board.

For each of the 25 organizations selected to submit full applications, NFF partnered with AEA Consulting and LarsonAllen and conducted a half-day site visit to assess board and staff readiness, programming, and other organizational factors. In addition, NFF reviewed five years of audits from each organization, conducted follow-up phone conversations with key financial staff and then prepared a financial assessment, based on a simplified version of its Nonprofit Business Analysis.

A second peer review panel was convened in November 2005 to review the organizations’ applications as well as the organizational and financial assessment conducted by NFF.³ The initial plan called for a cohort of between 12 and 13 participating organizations. But because of the number and quality of the applicants, a decision was made to increase the number of participating organizations in order to achieve a better balance of organizational budget sizes and ethnic and geographic distribution. The cohort was thus increased to 17 groups. This caused the annual grant amounts to be decreased in order to accommodate the larger number of participants.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The review process that guided the selection of grantees provided panelists with a substantial body of data beyond the material submitted by the applicants.

³ See Appendix B on page 32 of this report for a list of panelists.



Adjudicating among applicants is always difficult and MPO presented particular challenges in that artistic excellence was to be weighed along with evaluations of administrative and financial readiness.

The panelists convened to review applications were an exceptionally knowledgeable and experienced group. Their collective backgrounds in the field and hard work injected valuable insights into the selection process. That said, *having a review panel that included additional individuals skilled at reviewing and interpreting financial data might have made the review process even more insightful.* This would allow for a more balanced review that weighed factors that were related to the applicants' artistic and programmatic concerns along with financial and managerial readiness, a priority concern for NFF.



THE MPO INITIATIVE'S ORGANIZATIONAL COHORT

The seventeen organizations selected to participate in the MPO Initiative reflect as well as any small cohort can the richness and depth of mid-sized presenting organizations nationally. Expanding the cohort from the original conception of 12 to 13 organizations allowed for greater diversity – in ethnicity, geography, operating model, and, to the extent the program guidelines allowed, budget size. The MPO Initiative organizations included:

- ➔ Bang on a Can, Inc. (New York, NY)
- ➔ Contemporary Arts Center (New Orleans, LA)
- ➔ Danspace Project, Inc. (New York, NY)
- ➔ DiverseWorks Inc. (Houston, TX)
- ➔ Harlem Stage aka Aaron Davis Hall, Inc. (New York, NY)
- ➔ Kuumbwa Jazz Center (Santa Cruz, CA)
- ➔ La Peña Cultural Center (Berkeley, CA)
- ➔ Manchester Craftsmen's Guild/MCG Jazz (Pittsburgh, PA)
- ➔ Miami Light Project, Inc. (Miami, FL)
- ➔ Myrna Loy Center (Helena, MT)
- ➔ National Black Arts Festival (Atlanta, GA)
- ➔ New World Theater (Amherst, MA, ceased operation in Year 3)
- ➔ On the Boards (Seattle, WA)
- ➔ Outpost Productions, Inc. (Albuquerque, NM)
- ➔ Philadelphia Live Arts Festival/PhillyFringe (Philadelphia, PA)
- ➔ World Music Institute, Inc. (New York, NY)
- ➔ Youth Speaks, Inc. (San Francisco, CA)

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The range of programming and operating structures among participants varied dramatically even within this cohort. It included multi-disciplinary as well as single discipline presenters and organizations with traditional as well as unconventional management structures. This made the task of managing the Initiative and in particular, providing technical assistance, considerably more difficult, since even within this sub-sector of the presenting field, one size did not fit all.

Given that complexity, it is impressive that the program is able to show the moderate gains in financial stability documented later in this report. It is a tribute to a variety of factors including DDCF's and NFF's program design, NFF's oversight, the dedication and hard work of the staff and board members of MPO organizations, and the skill and flexibility of the technical assistance providers.



PART III

EVALUATION

In this section of the report, the consultants provide an overall assessment of the program, followed by a detailed look at the success of MPO participants in achieving the goals of the Initiative and an assessment of its individual components.

OVERALL QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Among participants in the Initiative, there was much thoughtful praise for the design of the program. While the grant itself was obviously of great value, the technical assistance and the opportunity to share information and experiences with peers contributed to the success of the Initiative. In addition, the flexibility that DDCF and NFF built into the Initiative was appreciated by participants, who used phrases like “mutual respect” and “trust,” and made comments such as “...they [NFF] really listened...” to characterize their interactions with NFF over the course of the Initiative.

For some, the value of certain aspects of the Initiative was not immediately clear. For example, several admitted to an initial skepticism about the value of NFF’s Nonprofit Business Analysis and its other financially-focused technical assistance. However, by the time the Initiative ended, the NBA’s value to executives was better understood. As one participant said, “Without the [technical assistance] program, I would not have realized the depth of difficulty we had gotten into or had the tools to begin to address it.” Others saw the value immediately. As one participant said “It emphasized the importance of gathering data and [it] forces an organization to look at itself and to think in terms of available financial capital...” This was an important learning since it is central to the integration of finance and program that characterizes NFF’s approach.

Based on the consultants’ interviews and review of participant comments to NFF, virtually all the groups reported a significant benefit from the program, one that often extended well beyond the dollars received. For some groups, MPO “redid the face of our organization,” was a “game-changer,” and “allowed us to become a more mature organization.”

There were, however, some concerns among some groups that they needed more support (in the form of both financial and technical assistance) than the program was able to deliver. Some groups reported difficulty in taking full advantage of the available consultant assistance, either because they were overwhelmed with other problems or because they were unaware of how better to access that component of MPO. Based on the reports of participants and the technical assistance providers, it is clear that the



capacity of participating groups to use the technical assistance varied dramatically. As one participant commented, “We probably needed more help than NFF realized...”

Several groups reported that while they found the NBA recommendations sound, it was difficult for them to continue to view those recommendations as top priority and to sort out the specific implementation steps that were required.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

Overall, both the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the MPO Initiative has been a success, especially considering the deteriorating economy over its four-year course. The qualitative interviews with MPO participants and others point strongly to the on-going impact of the Initiative on grantees well beyond its financial component. In addition, the quantitative analysis of the four years of data provided by MPO participants and the audit scan conducted by NFF at the conclusion of the Initiative indicate clear signs of moderate success, and this during the most challenging economy faced by arts organizations in over fifty years.

DEVELOPING THE PROPOSAL AND INITIAL CONTACTS WITH NFF

Those interviewees who reported having some contact with NFF during the application stage of the process were uniformly pleased with the interaction, although most organizations developed their proposals without any interaction with NFF staff. In some cases, groups or individuals had prior relationships with NFF and in all cases, questions were answered promptly and thoroughly.

According to interviews with MPO participants, senior staff members generally conceptualized and wrote the proposal with review by key board leaders. In a few cases, the process was more involved, with staff and/or board retreats devoted to answering the questions posed in the application. It was not uncommon for the process of applying to provoke serious discussion of important questions among participants, more so than most other grant applications. According to one interviewee, the application process itself was “incredibly valuable...” and spurred a retreat with key staff and board members to address the issues it raised.

For a few organizations, key board members were actively engaged with staff in the process of planning the application, which provided them with a deeper understanding of the organization’s condition and the critical issues it faced. Usually, however, one or several board members tracked the process while the application was conceptualized and written by staff members.



OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The procedures implemented by NFF made for a generally smooth experience for applicants and grantees. In a program of this degree of complexity, it would not be unusual for applicants to find it difficult to get questions answered or to understand what was required of them. That was not the case for this Initiative. NFF received exceptionally high marks on this score from all respondents.

MEETING THE GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE

The consultants evaluated the success of participants in meeting the goals of the MPO Initiative using some key metrics gathered annually by NFF. While these data are useful, it is important to remember that the small cohort of participating organizations means that the experience of individual groups can weigh heavily on the outcome. In one instance, we present the data in two ways to account for the outsized impact of an individual organization. It is also difficult to factor in the impact of national economic conditions. The qualitative data provided by participants and others involved in the Initiative offers a valuable additional source of information and insight for this evaluation.

It should be noted that one MPO participant, New World Theatre, which was a component of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, was closed by the University before the end of the Initiative due to financial challenges faced by the University. Its data is not included in the quantitative aggregates reported in this section of the evaluation.

GOAL 1: SUSTAIN/INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS TO CREATE/PERFORM WORK

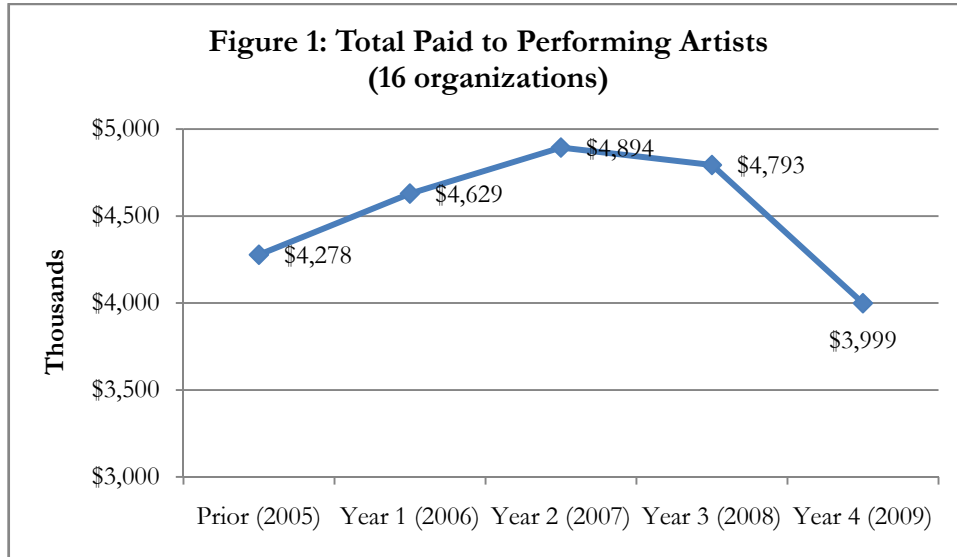
It was a requirement of the grant to spend "...at least 25 percent of the award on direct artistic programming expenses" and this often allowed groups to sustain or increase opportunities for artists. In some cases, MPO funding allowed groups to reallocate their existing resources so that total artistic spending remained at higher levels than might otherwise have been possible given the economic environment. Several key metrics, gathered annually by NFF during the Initiative and analyzed on the following pages, document this. The picture painted by these metrics shows a program with modest successes in this area, muted by external factors, notably the impact of the deteriorating economy seen in Year 3 and thereafter.

Total Amount Paid to Artists

The aggregate that was paid to artists totaled \$4,277,654 in the year prior to MPO's inception. While the figure for Year 4 (2009) of the Initiative dropped to \$3,998,820 (a decline of 7 percent), intervening years show an upward trend, as shown in Figure 1 on the following page. Using data from Year 2 (2007) of the Initiative (before the full impact of the downturn was felt), there is an increase of 14 percent, which is a substantial gain. Given the initial direction of the amount allocated to artists' fees, it does not seem

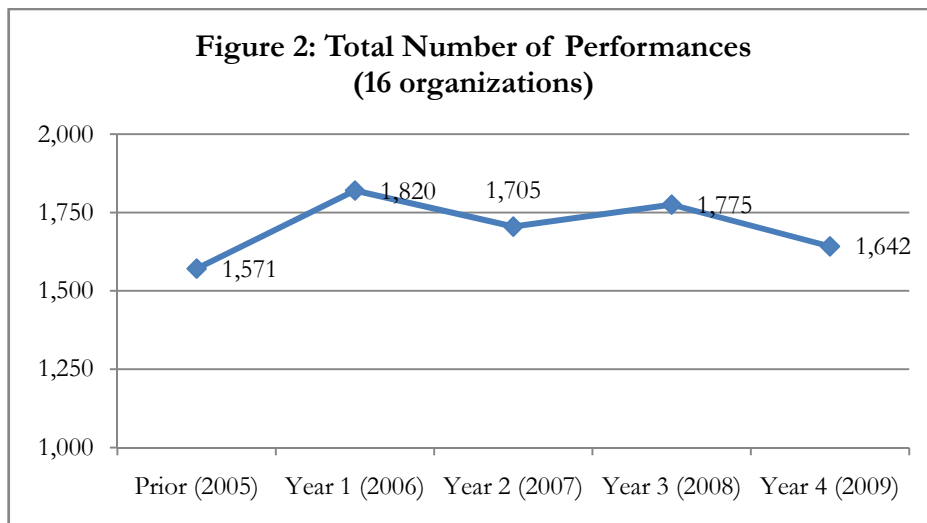


unreasonable to attribute the slight decline in Year 3 (2008) and the steeper decline in Year 4 (2009) to the difficult state of the national economy.



Total Number of Performances

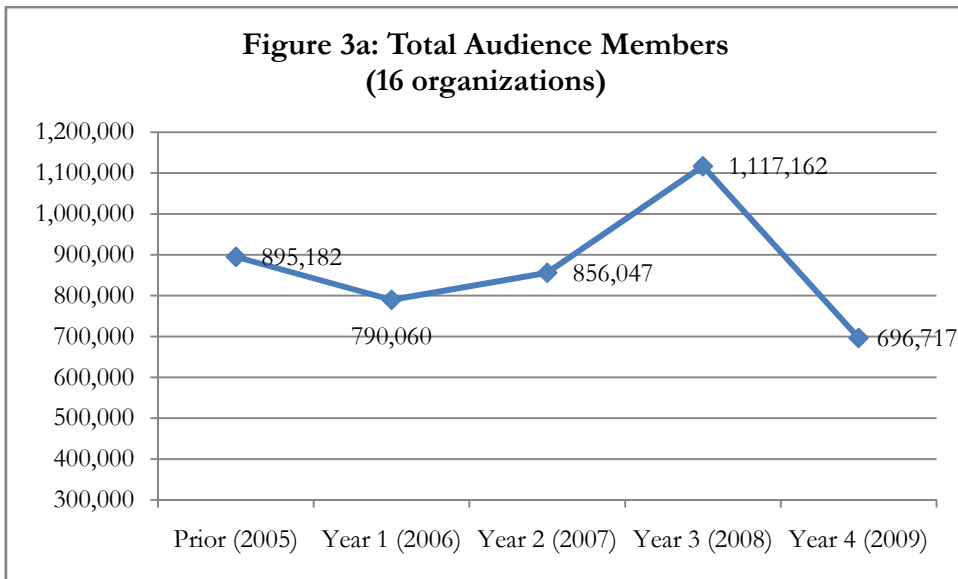
A similar story unfolds in the data about number of performances, although there is a slight increase (of about 5 percent) over the four years. The aggregate number of performances in the year prior to MPO (1,571) increased to 1,642 in Year 4, and all years of the Initiative had more performances than the year prior to participation. However, the improvement was not consistent as Figure 2 below indicates and was at its lowest in Year 4.



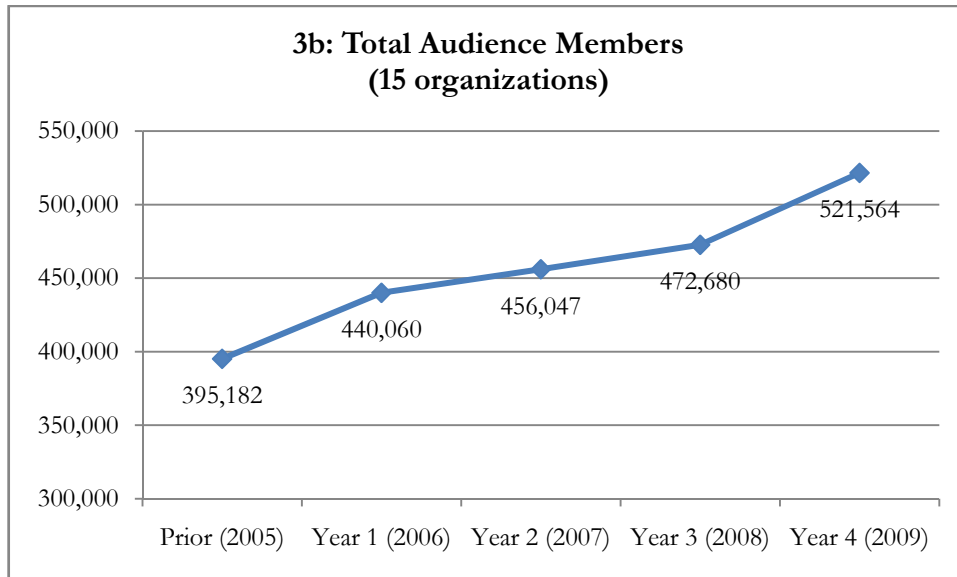


Total Audience Size

The data for total audience size present a particularly complicated picture. After increasing by over 25 percent between the year prior to MPO through Year 3 (2008) of the Initiative, the total audience for all MPO groups decreased dramatically in Year 4 (2009), dropping to just under 700,000. This represented a decrease of 22 percent over the four years of the program. (See Figure 3a below.)



A review of the data by organization and interviews with participants indicate that one organization had a history of attendance variation since it schedules a significantly different number of ticketed events, in different venues, each year. When the consultants eliminate that group's data from the analysis, a different picture emerges. The total audience in the year prior to MPO (395,182) increased to 521,564 in Year 4, an increase of 32 percent. (See Figure 3b on the following page.)



The consultants have preferred to avoid presenting analyses of less than the entire dataset, given that even its full complement is relatively small. However, in this case, they believe that it is justified, since the figures for the full cohort may have overstated the decrease. The modified analysis indicates a considerably more positive outcome, one that is more consistent with narrative findings.

Additional Metrics

In addition to the key annual metrics of the amount paid to artists, the number of performances, and the size of audiences, data was collected for four additional data points, including:

- ➡ Pre- or post-performance lectures or discussions
- ➡ Residencies
- ➡ Workshops or master classes
- ➡ Commissions of new work.

It is important to remember that these activities were not required of MPO participants and not all groups offered all of these activities. As a result, individual organizations that did offer a large number of one or another of these activities in a given year had an outsize impact on the aggregate. While it is possible to posit hypotheses for the disparate trends of each of these metrics, the consultants believe that such efforts are limited by the small sample size and the impact of external factors like the economy.

With this caveat in mind, the consultants note that their analysis of data for these indicators suggests consistently positive results in all four areas. (See Figure 4 below.) The



area with the least positive change is that of pre-/post-performance lectures/discussions, which only grew by 4 percent over the four years of the program (with diminished growth in Years 3 and 4). Commissions of new work showed significant growth over the four years (an increase of 22 percent) although this area also showed the impact of the economic downturn, with the highest level of commissions reported in Year 2. Residencies and workshops/master classes showed sustained growth over all four years of the program.

Figure 4: Additional Metrics (16 Organizations)

	<i>Prior to Program</i>	<i>Year 1 (2006)</i>	<i>Year 2 (2007)</i>	<i>Year 3 (2008)</i>	<i>Year 4 (2009)</i>	<i>% change</i>
Pre-/Post-Performance Lectures/Discussions	141	178	160	152	147	4%
Residencies	73	69	75	84	85	16%
Workshops/Master Classes	446	452	495	514	540	21%
Commissions of New Work	55	66	79	71	67	22%

Narrative Data

The narrative data tell a considerably more nuanced story that is helpful in understanding the Initiative’s impact on the achievement of this goal. For example, in several cases, because of the availability of MPO resources, organizations were able to develop more consistent and thoughtfully curated programs over the course of their season. This translated into a stronger brand and greater loyalty from audience members, which could in part explain the overall increase in audiences indicated in Figure 3b.

For some groups, knowing that they had a base of predictable programming dollars available for several years meant that they were able to establish on-going and multi-year relationships with particular artists, especially ones making “riskier” work, that resulted in richer, more complex programming and could translate in the future to increased workshops, residencies, or additional audience. This cultivation is likely to have a stronger impact in future seasons.

Other groups reported that after reviewing their Nonprofit Business Analysis or working with their technical assistance provider, they rethought their program offerings and concluded that they were undertaking too much. With that in mind, they identified strategies to develop longer-term relationships with artists and audiences while presenting fewer programs. For example, one interviewee commented that the MPO resources allowed his organization to do more diverse work and develop “...more sophisticated relationships with artists.”



OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

A moderate increase in key measures (including the total amount paid to artists, total number of performances, and total audience size) suggests that a degree of success in increasing opportunities for artists to create or perform work was achieved. Other metrics (number of pre-/post-performance lectures/discussions, residencies, workshops/master classes, and commissions) show healthy improvement, although these measures are not relevant to all participating organizations.

The qualitative data indicates an even greater degree of success with respect to this goal. As shown above, the ways in which the Initiative had an impact on providing additional resources for artists were varied and for a number of organizations, resulted in strengthened relationships with artists, through deeper relationships as well as increased services.

GOAL 2: MEET SPECIFIC WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES

As part of the application process, all MPO groups proposed one or several goals as the focus of their involvement in the Initiative, based on three categories, as outlined above on page 9 and including environmental challenges, growth opportunities, and/or operational sustainability. The application was quite thorough and required extensive detail on what they proposed to do during the four years, how they would do it, how it would benefit artists, and how it would contribute to the sustainability of the organization. The groups had an opportunity to review and modify their work plans as the result of two driving factors:

- ➡ First, the grant amounts were less than what most groups had expected.
- ➡ Second, the initial Nonprofit Business Analysis provided findings that often suggested shifts in emphasis or priority.

Most groups' work plan objectives shifted in terms of emphasis in response to altered conditions in the economy, although most changes were not dramatic. For some groups, the experience of modifying and implementing their work plan over four tumultuous years was a "transformational" experience that "changed [our organization's] DNA..." and that "...came at exactly the right time for us." However, the experience varied substantially from group to group. Some groups started the program with very specific and clear expectations of their long-term direction (for example, building or renovating a facility) only to decide, based on NBA data, consulting advice, or a changing economic or political climate, to move in a different direction or scale back their plans. As one interviewee said, "Once we decided not to move, we focused on upgrades and other ways to improve our situation..."

For other groups, the economy or the environment completely derailed the objectives they outlined in their application. In those instances, the groups report that the flexibility



exhibited by NFF and DDCF allowed them to maneuver resources in ways that, in some cases, allowed them to survive in situations that they might not otherwise have been able to overcome. According to one interviewee, “NFF was always incredibly supportive and responsive and flexible [in response to our situation]...”

The impact of the recession on these groups has been profound and many interviewees stated that the firm, four-year commitment of grant dollars was an invaluable aid to their survival. For many groups, the economy forced substantial mid-course corrections. So, for example, those groups whose work plans called for increasing the number of staff positions or the hours of selected employees or improving staff salaries found that while they were able to start that process, they either had to extend the process over a longer period or scale back some of the increases because of budgetary constraints.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

Generally, the groups were successful in addressing the challenges that their work plans were designed to meet, although not always in the ways outlined in their initial proposal. Indeed, MPO participants’ work plan objectives were revised several times during the Initiative in response to additional information or changing circumstances and this can be taken as a positive sign of the flexibility of the administration of the Initiative.

GOAL 3: SUSTAIN OR INCREASE FINANCIAL STABILITY

For many MPO participants, there is an overlap between this program goal and the prior one since groups often had goals that included financial components. For example, one organization proposed to address “organizational infrastructure,” including issues relating to staffing and board development, as well as “...develop[ing] the organization’s capital base to increase financial stability.”

The audit scan conducted by NFF at the completion of the program provides a useful analysis of the changes in the financial condition of MPO participants between 2005, the year prior to when the program began and its final year, FY2009. NFF reviewed financial reports from the groups and compared two measures of financial health:

- The state of **operating surpluses or deficits** (before depreciation), which were categorized as follows:
 - Groups with regular annual surpluses
 - Groups with periodic annual surpluses or breakeven
 - Groups with regular annual deficits.

- The state of **unrestricted liquid net assets**, which were categorized as follows:
 - Groups with consistently positive liquidity
 - Groups with consistently low levels liquidity



- Groups with steady downward trend in liquidity.

Groups were more successful at improving the financial condition of their income statements. As Figure 5 below indicates, the percentage of groups with regular surpluses increased dramatically and the percentage of groups with regular deficits declined just as dramatically over the course of the Initiative.

Figure 5: Income Statement Health – Operating Surpluses/Deficits*	2005		2009	
Groups with regular surpluses	2	13%	7	44%
Groups with periodic surpluses or breakeven	7	44%	8	50%
Groups with regular deficits	7	44%	1	6%
*Note: As noted above, data excludes one organization that was closed by its host institution at the end of Year 3.				

Figure 6 below suggests a more complicated picture for balance sheet health and the ability of participants to build unrestricted reserves. According to NFF’s audit scan, in both 2005 and 2009, half the MPO participants showed a steady downward trend in liquidity. Slight improvements were recorded by several groups, although overall, participants were less successful at addressing issues of liquidity.

Figure 6: Balance Sheet Health/Liquidity – Unrestricted Net Assets*	2005		2009	
Groups with consistently positive liquidity	5	31%	6	38%
Groups with consistently low levels liquidity	3	19%	2	13%
Groups with steady downward trend in liquidity	8	50%	8	50%
*Note: As noted above, data excludes one organization that was closed by its host institution at the end of Year 3.				

Narrative Data

The narrative data generally support these metrics, although it is a complicated story given the upheaval caused by the economy and its impact on these organizations. A small number of participants declared themselves unequivocally “stronger” and the impact of the program on their financial stability to be “wildly successful.” As one individual stated, “We are stronger as an organization than we were, smarter about how we do business... [and without MPO investments] there’s no way we would have weathered this economy.”

However, some groups had a considerably less positive experience. According to one interviewee, for example, their “biggest disappointment” was that they weren’t able to build the cash reserves they had planned for. Another interviewee reported that MPO



helped “sustain us for the years we had the grant but...[now] we are in worse shape than ever before financially,” a result of the deteriorating economy.

Taken as a whole, however, most groups found positive signs relative to their financial stability. Despite the fact that some groups that were on the way to building cash reserves found it hard to maintain them at the desired level, there was appreciation for what they were nevertheless able to accomplish. One interviewee commented, for example, that their cash reserve was smaller than they hoped it would be by the end of the Initiative but “we *had* a cash reserve...[and that] was a life-saver for us.” In addition, a number of groups felt that their finances were “heading in the right direction” and were certainly better than they would have been without MPO. So while some organizations were less positive, the feeling is best summarized by the comment of one participant, who said, “At the end, we’re not better but we’re not worse – that’s ‘sustain,’ isn’t it?”

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The MPO groups showed a modest improvement in their financial health over the course of the Initiative. The audit scan conducted by NFF at the completion of the Initiative indicates this improvement, although liquidity continues to be a challenge.

The narrative research supports these findings and indicates that most groups found some improvement in their financial condition at the end of the Initiative, although the declining economy caused their improvements to be less pronounced than would otherwise have been the case.

THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPONENT

CONSULTANT ASSISTANCE

Each participating organization was assigned a technical assistance provider by NFF and a pool of just under \$1 million was available for this purpose. Thus each group had access to an average of approximately \$57,000 of assistance that was tailored to its needs, as articulated in its application. Those needs were often modified after the Nonprofit Business Analysis was conducted, since it frequently suggested new or additional areas of focus for assistance.

Some organizations understood the value of the technical assistance while others did not immediately grasp the potential benefit. There appear to have been two factors influencing whether the groups took the maximum advantage of the assistance:

- ➔ First, it depended on the “readiness” of the organization to absorb the assistance, in that some groups were more familiar with working with consultants on these sorts of matters.



- ➡ Second, the particular fit of the consultant’s approach played a role, in that for those groups whose initial contact wasn’t fully satisfactory, there was a tendency to put this component “on the back burner....”

An important concern among many groups was that they did not have a say in selecting the consultant to whom their organization was assigned. As a result, some participants felt that the consultant selected was “...not a good fit for [their] organization” because of the budget size of their organization or some other attribute (for example, its geographic location relative to the consultant or its mix of funding sources). One interviewee valued the assistance but “would have enjoyed being inspired and challenged more...” by their consultant.

In addition to not being able to select their technical assistance provider, there was a general lack of clarity about this component. For example, many groups reported:

- ➡ They did not understand exactly what they could or could not do with the technical assistance.
- ➡ They were unclear over the course of the four years how much consulting time was remaining for their use.
- ➡ In a few cases, when their consultant left his or her position, the groups did not realize that he or she had been replaced; this communications problem occasionally meant that implementation of the consultant’s work was less effective than it might otherwise have been.

In one or two cases, participants reported that they were not able to undertake the projects they wanted to do as part of this component. This problem appeared to stem from the fact that some organizations were quick to engage with the technical assistance component and other groups took longer. While each group was told it had a certain dollar amount of assistance available over the four years of the program, the money was pooled and toward the end of the program, some groups that focused on technical assistance later in the process found that the resources weren’t available for their projects. While this was not strictly the case, because the allocation of technical assistance to groups was not as clear as it might have been to them, it appeared arbitrary.

Two or three participants typified the assistance as “not helpful” although there were an equal number of others who considered it “transformational.” Not surprisingly, most comments were positioned between these two extremes. Participants talked about the “amazing” work of consultants and how they were able to “update our strategic plan and mission statement.” For many groups, especially in the second half of the program, the economic meltdown made focusing on this component increasingly difficult, given other concerns that were deemed to be more pressing.



The sorts of problems described above are inevitable in a program like MPO and it should be noted that for the most part, they did not get in the way of an engaging and important experience for participants.

NFF and the technical assistance providers got unambiguously high marks on their flexibility. As groups saw needs for assistance that had not been articulated in their initial proposals or even in the modifications after the NBA, they report a willingness on the part of NFF to address their needs. According to one interviewee, “NFF allowed us to bring in a [specialist consultant] to do an important piece of work for us. They were very open to working something out for us...”

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

While this component created the greatest confusion for MPO participants, it was highly valued, as was NFF’s flexibility in how it was implemented. The groups were concerned about not being able to select their consultant and confused about how much consultant time was available to them at various stages of the Initiative. This information was provided by NFF to the consultants but was not always delivered by the consultants to the groups.

An alternative procedure to assigning consultants to groups might be considered. This might mean that participants could select their technical assistance provider from a list of consultants vetted by NFF and DDCF to ensure quality and consistency of approach. Short of that, making sure that all participating groups received clear and consistent information about the technical assistance resources available to them would go quite a distance in addressing their concerns.

Greater alignment in approach among the technical assistance providers would better support NFF’s goal of integrating groups’ thinking about financial and programmatic planning and operations. Since this is such an important component of NFF’s approach to working with nonprofits, consideration should be given to the advantages and disadvantages of such an emphasis on alignment. The value of this approach must be weighed, for example, against the added difficulty it would cause in allowing participating groups to choose their own technical assistance providers.

NONPROFIT BUSINESS ANALYSIS

In most cases, the process of obtaining the data for the NBA was straightforward. In some cases, however, gathering the data was “intense” and required meetings or telephone calls to ensure that the data were being portrayed correctly. This often resulted from the specifics of how a particular organization presented its financial information. The process of gathering the data and conducting the review of the final product tended to be more complicated when a participant group was part of a larger nonprofit entity or when the group had financial interactions with government entities that mandated how financial information had to be presented.



While many of the groups felt that the NBA confirmed what they already knew about their financial situation, in many cases this was seen as enhancing rather than limiting its value. The NBA's value took various forms:

- It often validated management's perspective on the financial condition of the organization.
- It provided a clearer, more graphic "story-line" to explain the organization's situation to board members or public or private sector funders.
- It helped to emphasize important strategic considerations (e.g., budgeting for surpluses, developing distinct reserve funds, understanding the full cost of new/renovated facilities, etc.) that might not have received sufficient attention in the existing formats.
- It showed staff useful new ways to "slice and dice" financial data to provide new perspectives and insights on the organization's financial condition.

In a few cases, the utility of the NBA experience was limited by what some participants perceived as the difficulty of the consultants conducting the NBA of "getting" their organization either because they felt the consultant was used to working with larger organizations or because he or she didn't spend sufficient time to understand the unique situation of the organization. This was especially problematic when the organization's financial practice did not align with that of NFF.

An additional issue raised by representatives of several participating organizations, as well as technical assistance providers and NFF staff, was that the recommendations of the NBA sometimes led to unrealistic expectations of the speed with which the organization could move on the identified issues.

It is important to note that, even with the reservations, the overwhelming consensus was that the NBAs' value far outweighed the challenges.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The NBA was valued by most if not all of MPO participants. While there were occasional instances when an organization's financial systems made implementing or interpreting the NBA more complicated, these were the exception and even for those organizations, it was ultimately seen as adding value.

It would have been helpful to many of the groups if the methodology of the NBA incorporated some greater detail about tactical steps or a timeline for implementing the findings of the NBA, as a means of setting proper expectations.



That said, the consultants acknowledge that it was beyond the purview of the MPO Initiative to provide the degree of tactical assistance that might have eased this problem.

In some cases more attention might have been paid to structured follow-up assistance for implementing the recommendations of the NBA. While the Initiative's budget precluded this sort of on-going tactical assistance, it might be considered for future initiatives so that the value of the NBA and other insights of the technical assistance component are enhanced as much as possible. To the extent that this need reflects the level of readiness of participants to undertake an initiative of this sort, better selection procedures, as mentioned on page 9, might be helpful.

TOOLS FOR TOUGH TIMES

When the economy began its decline, NFF decided to expand its technical assistance offerings to include a package of technical assistance modules for MPO groups to consider. It included such offerings as:

- Program profitability modeling
- Scenario planning
- Cash flow modeling.

This specific set of tools, offered to MPO participants in the final year of the program, was exceptionally well received by those groups that opted to employ them. Those groups that had a less than completely positive assessment of the tools were more likely to blame their own inability to spend the time to focus on learning how to use the tool, rather than the utility of the tool itself. Coming at the end of the Initiative and during the economic downturn, adoption of the tools was probably less than it otherwise might have been. Nevertheless, the focus on providing tools tailored to deal with the difficult economy was viewed positively by all the groups, even those that didn't use them.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

These tools, introduced as the economy declined, were valued by those groups that chose to use them. All groups, even those that chose not to use the Tools, appreciated NFF's flexibility in responding to the changed economic circumstances so quickly.



THE CONVENINGS

The convenings at the beginning of the Initiative were highly valued by participants, with the later ones described as “under-utilized opportunities.” NFF, in consultation with MPO groups, scaled back the 2008 convening to free up funds to provide additional technical assistance. The scaled back 2009 convening was the result of the deteriorating economy and was conducted in conjunction with the annual Arts Presenters conference in New York, which many groups were planning to attend. Most interviewees commented positively on the value of meeting with colleagues and the opportunity it provided to share information.

While for some individuals the convenings were primarily opportunities for social interaction, many others found learning about the shared circumstances of their colleagues from across the nation to be profoundly reassuring and helpful. This was especially true for representatives of organizations that were located outside major urban centers. As one participant put it, “It made the program more real, more visceral...”

In addition, many interviewees assigned great value to having board members present at convenings. It was seen as a way to inject the learning more deeply into the organization and to educate board members to the larger field in which their organization functioned. It provided a perspective to board members that is difficult to provide through board meetings or one-to-one interactions with senior staff. For example, as one board member who attended several convenings said, “I saw how highly regarded our Executive Director was by the others and that was impressive...”

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

According to interviewees, the convenings were a subsidiary but important component of the project. While important, however, the utility of the convenings in furthering the specific goals of the Initiative was less clearly articulated by interviewees.

The face-to-face interactions of the convenings can be augmented using electronic means, given how valuable these contacts are to participants. Some attempt to build on the convenings to foster a more cohesive group of participating organizations, using Internet-based communication mechanisms (e.g., webinars, dedicated web sites to share information and insights, or social media interactions) might have been a relatively low-cost approach to providing additional peer learning among MPO groups.



PART IV

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Evaluation of philanthropic programs in the arts is an imprecise science in the best of times, even when what is to be evaluated is narrowly focused and primarily quantitative. When some of the goals for a program are both broad and qualitative in nature, as is the case for the MPO Initiative, evaluation is more difficult. It is further compounded in times of upheaval, when the surrounding conditions have changed markedly from when the program was designed. Such certainly defines the period during which MPO was active.

The purpose of this evaluation is to answer two general questions:

- ➔ ***Was the Mid-Sized Presenting Organizations Initiative a success?*** A review of the relevant metrics would lead to the clear conclusion that it was, as this report has made clear. Particularly when considered within the context of the deteriorating economic climate over the years of the Initiative, the positive performance of the MPO cohort is noteworthy.
- ➔ ***Did NFF deliver on its promises?*** Again, the answer is yes, and as the economy worsened it displayed admirable flexibility and ultimately delivered more than promised.

Yet there are other questions that are more difficult to answer. They raise important questions for evaluation going forward and the consultants pose them to further a dialogue on the role of evaluation in such programs. The questions are:

- ➔ Were the results as good as might have been expected?
- ➔ Did the target organizations fare better than their peers?
- ➔ In hindsight, were the techniques and methods chosen the best way to address the goals of the program, especially given the volatility of the environment?

WERE THE RESULTS AS GOOD AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED?

It is hard to know. Greater clarity on this question might have been possible had the organizations themselves been required to be clearer about their own desired outcomes – especially quantitative outcomes – that they believed constituted success. Each might have evaluated their own metrics carefully as part of the requirements of the program.



Even though program objectives shifted during the course of the program, such an approach would have provided an additional benchmark for evaluation.

DID THE TARGET ORGANIZATIONS FARE BETTER THAN THEIR PEERS?

Evaluation of this kind rarely compares a target group to a matched set of peers. Yet without such comparisons, yardsticks are not very useful. A presenter's audience can grow by 5 percent at a time when peer organizations, as a whole, are experiencing much greater growth. Under these circumstances, 5 percent does not look like success. On the other hand, in times when peers are experiencing declines, it can look like a real win. While such a benchmarking exercise would require careful thought and additional resources, NFF might seriously consider ways to integrate this sort of approach into an ongoing evaluation strategy for such programs in the future.

IN HINDSIGHT, WERE THE TECHNIQUES AND METHODS CHOSEN THE BEST WAY TO ADDRESS THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE VOLATILITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT?

We will never know, of course, but the question is an important one. Would the same amount of money invested in the same organizations with a different philanthropic approach (even as fully unrestricted grants) have produced different – and perhaps even better – results? There is only one way to find out. Grantmakers should seriously consider working together to test a variety of interventions, comparing results when different strategies are employed. Otherwise, there is a limit to the implications one can derive from the results of a program like this one.

Finally, it would be useful to return to these organizations in three years and assess whether there is a discernable difference in them as a class of presenters. Did they fare better than their peers? Are the goals of the program more enshrined in their corporate culture? Is their impact on the field significant? If so, this would be a true sign of success.



APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

The following individuals participated in confidential interviews as part of this evaluation. Note that affiliations are listed for information only and were accurate at the time of contact.

Marty Ashby	Executive Producer, MCG Jazz
Diane Barber	Co-Executive Director, DiverseWorks Inc.
Neil Barclay	Chief Executive Officer, National Black Arts Festival
Elizabeth Boone	Artistic and Executive Director, Miami Light Project, Inc.
Robert Browning	Executive and Artistic Director, World Music Institute, Inc.
Ben Cameron	Program Director of Arts, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
Peggy Cheng	Director of Institutional Giving, Danspace Project, Inc.
Paul Chin	Executive Director, La Peña Cultural Center
Sharon Combs	Vice President, Direct Services, Nonprofit Finance Fund
Pat Cruz	Executive Director, Harlem Stage
Lane Czaplinski	Artistic Director, On the Boards
Leighanne Daley Sanchez	Managing Director, Youth Speaks, Inc.
Renee Danger-Jones	Director of Development, Harlem Stage
Adrian Ellis	Executive Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center; former Director AEA Consulting
Leatrice Ellzy	Director of Artistic Programming, National Black Arts Festival
Diane Espaldon	Principal and Director of Consulting at LarsonAllen Nonprofit & Government Group; MPO technical assistance provider
Olga Garay	Executive Director, Los Angeles Dept. of Cultural Affairs; former Program Director of Arts, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
Lisa Gehring	Director of Finance, MCG Jazz
Nancy Gelles	Former Board Chair, Miami Light Project, Inc.
Tom Guralnick	Executive Director, Outpost Productions, Inc.
Glenn Gruber	Associate Director and CFO, Contemporary Arts Center
Muriel Hepburn	Deputy Director, National Black Arts Festival
Stephanie Hughley	Vice President of Programming and New Media, New Jersey Performing Arts Center; former Executive Producer, National Black Arts Festival
Judith Hussie-Taylor	Executive Director, Danspace Project, Inc.



Cheryl Ikemiya	Senior Program Officer for the Arts, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
Candace Jackson	Principal, CJAM Consulting; MPO technical assistance provider
Tim Jackson	Executive/Artistic Director, Kuumbwa Jazz Center
James Kass	Executive Director, Youth Speaks, Inc.
Michael Kenny	Vice Chair Board of Directors, Harlem Stage
Duncan Manville	Board President, On the Boards
Clara Miller	President and CEO, Nonprofit Finance Fund
Ed Noonan	Executive Director, Myrna Loy Center
Walter Putnam	Board member, Outpost Productions, Inc.
Laura Ruiz	CFO, La Peña Cultural Center
Morgan Russell	Former National Alliances Associate, Nonprofit Finance Fund
Roberto Saco	Board member, Miami Light Project, Inc.
Kenny Savelson	Executive Director, Bang on a Can, Inc.
Carolyn Schleckler	Managing Director, Philadelphia Live Arts Festival/Philly Fringe
Merit Shalett	Associate Director for Development and Communication, Contemporary Arts Center
Sylvia Sherman	Grant writer, La Peña Cultural Center
Holly Sidford	President, Helicon Collaborative; MPO technical assistance provider
Robin Sirakides	Board member, Kuumbwa Jazz Center
Isabel Soffer	Program Director, World Music Institute, Inc.
Nick Stuccio	Producing Director, Philadelphia Live Arts Festival/Philly Fringe
Rebecca Thomas	Vice President and Product Manager of Consulting Services, Nonprofit Finance Fund; MPO technical assistance provider
Tim Thomas	Director of Development, Bang on a Can, Inc.
Bobbi Todaro	Managing Director, Kuumbwa Jazz Center
Chris Tokar	Development Director, World Music Institute, Inc.
Laurie Uprichard	Director, Dublin Dance Festival; former Executive Director, Danspace Project, Inc.
Anneliese Van Arsdale	Development Manager, Philadelphia Live Arts Festival/Philly Fringe
Sixto Wagan	Co-Executive Director, DiverseWorks Inc.
Jay Weigel	Executive/Artistic Director, Contemporary Arts Center
Sarah Wilke	Managing Director, On the Boards



APPENDIX B

2005 MPO INITIATIVE NATIONAL PEER REVIEW PANEL

A.B. Spellman	Panel Chair; Retired Deputy Chairman for Guidelines and Panel Operations, National Endowment for the Arts; Washington, DC
Philip Bither	Performing Arts Curator, Walker Art Center; Minneapolis, MN
James Borders	President, James B. Borders & Associates; New Orleans, LA
Ruth Felt	President, San Francisco Performances; San Francisco, CA
Victoria Frey	Managing Director, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art; Portland, OR
Murray Horwitz	Director and Chief Operating Officer, AFI Silver Theater and Cultural Center; Silver Spring, MD
Cora Mirikitani	CEO, Center for Cultural Innovation; Los Angeles, CA
Georgiana Pickett	Interim Executive Director, 651Arts; Brooklyn, NY