



Tips for Talking About Public Funding

Together we can educate our community about the impact of the significant investment in arts and culture in our community that is made possible by the residents of Cuyahoga County. This document is a quick go-to guide for reference when creating effective communication tools such as: curtain speech, banners, newsletter article, sidebar article in an annual report, and messaging to trustees or staff.

Key Points

Of Cuyahoga County residents surveyed*, 68% think it is important to provide some public funding to arts and culture organizations in Cuyahoga County, but only 31% have heard of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. Overall Cuyahoga County residents have very positive attitudes toward arts and cultural activities, but also expressed accountability, public benefit, and transparency as being important. This is an opportunity to educate our audiences on how CAC funding is connected to your organization.

- 1. Educate your audience** about the existence of public funding for arts and culture in Cuyahoga County. The tax was approved by voters in 2006.
- 2. Connect the public funding with Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.** CAC is the public agency that administers the tax, which invests \$15 million annually in organizations who bring art and culture to life in our communities.
- 3. Tell your “CAC story”.** The best way to share the impact of public funding is to share a story of what has been made possible for your organization that would not have been possible without the support of public funding. Consider the following when working on your story:
 - How has CAC funding enabled your organization to **enhance education** for Cuyahoga County residents, and ultimately better serve your community?
 - Share a story of an inspirational educational field trip, programming for seniors, or introducing a unique program to a community.
 - How has CAC funding enabled your organization to **enrich the quality of life** for participants?
 - Examples: story of a child experiencing an art/music/science activity, grassroots community-building programs, or free concerts/performances.
 - **CAC funding supports nearly 200 arts and culture organizations** that represent a significant sector of our county’s economy. How is this funding being used by your organization to benefit the public?
 - Share stories, photos, and videos (when possible) of community-based performances, events, concerts, free classes, programs, and festivals that have a cultural impact on the community as well as an economic impact.
- 4. Last, but certainly not least, say THANK YOU to your community!** How often do we get thanked as taxpayers? This is an opportunity to share the impact of CAC funding, share an inspiring story about your organization, and say thank you to your community.

*Source: TRIAD Research Group, "Cuyahoga Arts & Culture Awareness Survey." November, 2014.

Prepare for Questions

Educating the public and your key audiences is not always as simple as sharing a positive story through a curtain or audience speech. Be prepared to answer specific questions about how CAC's funding impacts your organization and ultimately the community-at-large.

- **Know your organization's history with CAC:**
 - Total number of grants received from CAC, including the total amount of funding.
 - How much is your current grant and what is it being used for?
- **What is the tangible benefit of CAC funding for Cuyahoga County residents?**
 - Be prepared to share numbers on the overall benefit to the general public—attendees to events/programs, number of participants in educational programs and classes, examples of free programming that provides access to arts and culture for everyone.
 - Specific examples of how the CAC grant has helped your organization to improve the quality of life for participants/attendees.

Need help putting these talking points together or don't know the answers to these questions? Contact your program manager:

Jesse Hernandez, manager – general operating support at 216-515-8303 x108 or jhernandez@cacgrants.org
Stacey Hoffman, manager – project support at 216-515-8303 x101 or shoffman@cacgrants.org

Examples

Curtain speech example

Did you know that Cuyahoga County has a dedicated tax to support arts and culture in our county? This public funding, administered by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, is very important to the Beck Center for the Arts. It has not only helped to fund today's fantastic play but has also provided critical support over the past eight years that has allowed the Beck Center to deliver on its mission: *to inspire and enrich through dynamic arts education and performance*. We want you to know that this voter-approved support, over \$475,000 to date, has been invested back in you, our audience members and community. Thank you for your support!

Newsletter Example (excerpt)

Over the past eight years, MOCA Cleveland has received more than \$1.1 million in funding from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC). We'd like to take this opportunity to share a little bit more about this extremely important funding partner. Cuyahoga Arts & Culture is the public funder of arts and culture organizations, programs and events in Cuyahoga County. Established by voters in 2007, CAC has awarded over 1,200 grants since then, distributing over \$125 million in tax dollars to more than 300 organizations based in the County.

Since 2009, MOCA Cleveland's attendance has nearly tripled to more than 45,000 visits each year. Over the past several years, with the expansion into our new building, receiving general operating support from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture has allowed us to deliver compelling new programs.