

Living Cultural Heritage and the Traditional and Folk Arts in the Nonprofit Sector: Data on Scope, Finances, and Funding

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for
Alliance for California Traditional Arts

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This paper reports on a study using data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics, Candid (formerly known as the Foundation Center/GuideStar), and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies to assess the current universe of nonprofit Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations and provide a snapshot of current levels of private and state-level public funding to the subsector. The study contributes to a small but increasingly imperative body of research on arts and cultural organizations that serve underserved communities and communities of color. Better quantitative data on and analysis of such organizations is necessary to identifying inequity and building equity in the Arts and Culture, a pressing priority for the sector.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- **Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations or ECFs make up a large and distinct part of the nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector.**

Although their missions and activities often are overlooked, there are approximately 7,250 nonprofit Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations in operation throughout the U.S. The defining mission of these organizations is to use the arts, culture, and the humanities to discover, promote, sustain, and share cultural, ethnic, and community heritage, identity, and awareness. The fact that they prioritize heritage and cultural identity clearly distinguishes ECFs from other nonprofit arts and culture organizations and gives many ECFs special relevance to communities and people of color.

- **We cannot understand or intervene in this subsector unless we include and target small and very small organizations because they make up the great majority of ECF organizations.**

Past research has indicated that small ECFs predominate in the subsector. This study was unprecedented in its attention to ensuring that all available data on the small and very small nonprofit organizations that make up the subsector were included in our assessments of the scope and character of the subsector. In fact, we found that small and very small organizations make up more than 70% of all nonprofit Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations. These organizations, which hold less than \$25,000 in assets, are so small that they never have been counted in past quantitative studies.

- **Some places and populations are under-represented by ECFs.**

The number of ECFs per capita is low in three geographical areas in the U.S.: in the interior areas just off-the-Coast in the Western coastal states, in the adjacent Rocky Mountain region, and in Alaska. Hispanic populations across the country appear to be underrepresented by ECFs and Hispanic-affiliated Ethnic and Cultural organizations have lost share in the subsector since 2001. Black/African American populations across the South appear to be underrepresented by ECFs and mid-sized Black/African American-affiliated ECFs appear to be comparatively underdeveloped.

- **The geography of funding to the subsector is very uneven.**

In terms of total dollars, private funding far exceeds state-level funding to the subsector and, in general, private funding is mirroring populations and number of organizations. Where there are more people and more organizations, there are more private dollars flowing to the subsector. However, levels of state-level funding are enormously varied (though almost always quite minimal). The cause of that variation is not clear. In a subsector where public funding consistently has been shown to be distinctly important to organizational income and overall finances, that unevenness is particularly alarming. We found no evidence that state-level public funding is being used to fill gaps in private funding or gaps in service to underserved populations.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND EXISTING DATA

This report focuses on a distinct subsector of nonprofits in the U.S.: the nonprofit *Culture* subsector. Organizations within this subsector include, among others, those that sustain and promote living cultural heritage, cultural and ethnic awareness, and the traditional and folk arts. Along with the Arts and the Humanities, this distinct nonprofit Culture subsector makes up a part of the broader nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector, as defined by the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) at the IRS and the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) at the Urban Institute. These nonprofit Culture organizations use the arts, culture, and the humanities to discover, promote, sustain, and share cultural, ethnic, and community heritage, identity, and awareness. Put another way, these are organizations that intentionally and self-consciously understand their engagement with arts, cultural, and humanities activity as a way to express and sustain cultural heritage and community. Of course, there are many ways to promote cultural and community identity: through ethnic professional associations, through youth recreation programs, through scholarships and educational activities, through targeted policy advocacy. This study focuses on nonprofit organizations that use the arts, culture, and the humanities to do so.

Quantitative data on this subsector is scarce. Three reports make up the body of our existing quantitative knowledge. The first is *Cultural Centers of Color: A Report on a National Survey* (Bowles 1992), published by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and undertaken in consultation with the NEA's Expansion Arts Program (1971-1995). The second is *The Changing Faces of Tradition: A Report on the Folk and Traditional Arts in the United States* (Peterson 1996), also published by the NEA. That report is not primarily focused on quantitative data, but Peterson does report on some limited survey data in her introduction and single-authored chapter. The third is *Cultural Heritage Organizations: Nonprofits that Support Traditional, Ethnic, Folk, and Noncommercial Popular Culture* (Rosenstein 2006), published by the Urban Institute (see also Rosenstein and Brimer 2005). In addition, the more recent *Living Traditions: A Portfolio Analysis of the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk & Traditional Arts Program* (2019), provides data on NEA funding within the subsector and populations served. Together these reports provide the limited resources that have been available to portray the subsector in quantitative terms.

Although each of these reports is relevant to what might be understood as the universe of nonprofit Culture, they draw on different sets of organizations. So these reports cannot legitimately be used to track trends across or to define a single cohort.¹ On the other hand, the reports do have significant overlap, and each includes organizations that are a part of the subsector. Together, they can give some sense of the past character of the subsector and its development. Each report uses a distinct terminology to refer to the set of organizations it studied. Following Rosenstein, this paper uses the term *Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk Organizations* or ECFs to designate the set of organizations studied here.

In the existing literature, several key characteristics of this subsector are clear.

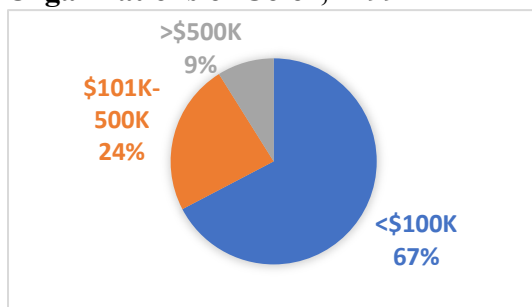
- **Equity is a priority concern.**

Questions of equity are the compelling reason why cultural leaders and policymakers began in the 1990s to examine the subsector using policy-oriented, quantitative approaches. As Bowles highlighted in *Cultural Centers of Color*, the first publication to examine this subsector, equity is an immediate and special concern in this arena: “A consistent and urgent theme of leaders of ethnically specific arts organizations of color was the need for equitable funding policies [to] address the country’s changing demographics, the special characteristics and needs of these organizations, and the aesthetic, social, economic, educational, and cultural contributions of community-based arts organizations” (1992:66). Although often conflated, two distinct though related concerns about equity can be traced through the literature: first, whether the cultural needs of certain populations are being systemically underserved and, second, whether resources within the nonprofit arts and cultural sector are distributed equitably.

- **Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk (ECF) organizations tend to be small or very small.**

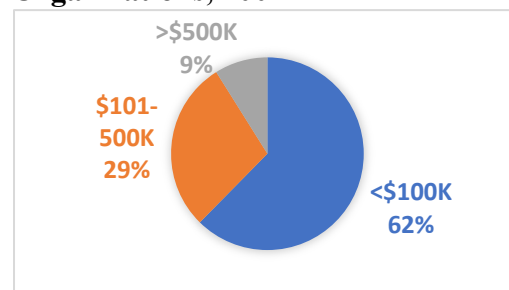
Previously reported data consistently show that the great majority of ECFs are small, with more than a quarter reporting annual revenue less than \$25,000.² Most nonprofit organizations in the U.S. are small; nonprofit ECFs have been shown as a group to be even smaller. In both 1991 and 2001, around 65% of ECFs were reported to have annual revenue less than \$100,000 (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1:
Revenues of “Ethnically Specific Arts Organizations of Color,” 1991



n=472. Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Rosenstein 2021 analysis of NuStat/NEA data (Bowles, 1992:34).

Figure 2:
Revenues of Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk Organizations, 2001



n=1621.
Source: Rosenstein 2021 analysis of Rosenstein and Brimer (2005).

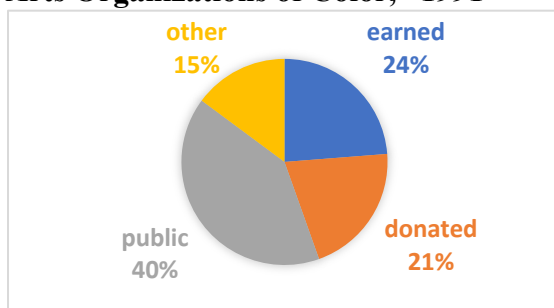
- **The Hispanic population is underrepresented by organizations in the subsector.**

Both *Cultural Centers of Color* and Rosenstein found that the proportion of Hispanic-affiliated ECFs is low compared to the proportion of Hispanic people in the U.S. population (Bowles 1992:54; Rosenstein 2005:20). This is true when looking nationally and when specific regional populations in the U.S. are considered. This finding has been amplified in recent research by Kim, Potochnick and Olson (2021).³

- **Government funding is a distinctly important source of income for organizations in the subsector.**

In the nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector as a whole, organizations gain most of their income from earned and donated sources; for example, in 2010, sources of nonprofit arts organization revenue broke out like this: donated – 45%, earned – 34%, public – 12%, other – 9%.⁴ Similar proportions are quite consistent through time. In comparison, ECFs gain a greater proportion of their income from government grants. *Cultural Centers of Color* found this income stream to be especially significant among the organizations it studied (see Figure 3).

Figure 3:
Sources of Income for “Ethnically Specific Arts Organizations of Color,” 1991



n=472. Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Rosenstein 2021 analysis of NuStat/NEA data (Bowles, 1992:34).

Rosenstein and Brimer (2005:197) found that among all ECFs, government funding made up an average 20% of revenue, approximately twice what we tend to find in the nonprofit arts sector as a whole. However, they also found that some ECFs drew significantly on public sources of funding while others drew very little. Public funding sources provided 29% of income for Black/African American-affiliated ECFs, 26% of income for Hispanic-affiliated ECFs, and 19% of income for Native American ECFs. In contrast, Asian/Pacific Island-affiliated ECFs gained just 4% of income from government funding, while South Asian-affiliated ECFs gained none. In more recent research, Voss et al. (2016) also found that “Culturally Specific Arts Organizations” are characterized by a distinct reliance on public funding compared to other organizations in the sector.

- **Living cultural heritage and traditional and folk arts activity is highly intersectoral.**

ECFs are classified within the nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector, but these organizations frequently sponsor programs that address community needs in education, food and nutrition, social services, and religion. At the same time, living cultural heritage programs frequently are sponsored by education, social service, community improvement, and religious organizations. Any study of the subsector must recognize that examining ethnic, folk, and living cultural heritage activity by looking narrowly at organizations classified as cultural organizations means missing the programmatic activities that are taking place in other types of organizations (Rosenstein and Brimer 2005; Rosenstein 2006).

A PORTRAIT OF NONPROFIT ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND FOLK ORGANIZATIONS

Approximately 7,250 nonprofit Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations are in operation in the U.S. today.⁵ ECFs represent approximately 6% of all organizations in the nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector, holding steady with estimates of their share of the sector in 2001. An estimated 2,000 ECFs have assets greater than \$25,000. A tiny segment, one half of one percent, is very large; just 59 ECFs have assets greater than \$10 million (see Table 1). Those very large ECFs control close to \$2.5 billion in assets.

On the other hand, more than 70 percent of nonprofit ECF organizations are small or very small. Although small organizations with assets between \$10,000 and \$25,000 and very small organizations with assets less than \$10,000 make up the great majority of the subsector, they have been neglected in past research. Reports from the field tell us that small and very small organizations do some of the most important cultural work in underserved populations and places (e.g., see Kitchener and Markusen 2012). To close this critical gap in knowledge about the subsector, this study focused special attention on collecting, cleaning, and analyzing a dataset that includes records of small and very small organizations drawn from the National Center for Charitable Statistics IRS Business Master File (BMF), the most comprehensive listing of nonprofit organizations available. BMF data was used to create a customized dataset of all Ethnic and Cultural organizations that obtained their IRS tax-exempt after 2005. We used that customized dataset to help us better understand the full scope of the evolving subsector (see the Methodological Appendix for details).

The development of nonprofit infrastructure often mirrors population levels; we tend to find more organizations where we find more people. That is what we would expect since nonprofits emerge in response to people's associational activity and on-the-ground needs. Where there is more activity and more need, we would expect to see the development of more nonprofit organizations. This isn't a rule or law, but asymmetry between the population of people and the population of organizations does call for examination. At the same time, unlike in some other nonprofit sectors such as health care, social services, or education, it is not necessarily the case that a lack of ECFs translates into a lack of service. Cultural activities take place every single day outside of nonprofits, in homes, religious institutions, unincorporated associations, businesses, and in public sector spaces and programs. While recognizing the value and vitality of those arenas of cultural activity outside formal cultural institutions, it is essential to acknowledge that a lack of nonprofit cultural infrastructure will mean that communities have less capacity to share resources, to connect with regional and national networks, and, perhaps most important, to access and maximize private and public funding and other resources such as low-cost loans that are exclusively available to incorporated nonprofit organizations.

In general, ECFs seem to follow a pattern that we would expect: densities of people tend to align with densities of ECF organizations (see Figure 4). However, that pattern is less apparent in three areas of the country: in interior areas just off-the-Coast in the Western coastal states, in the adjacent Rocky Mountain region, and in Alaska.⁶ In these areas, we see lower rates of ECFs per capita.

**Table 1:
ECF Organizations with Assets Greater than \$10 million (n=59)**

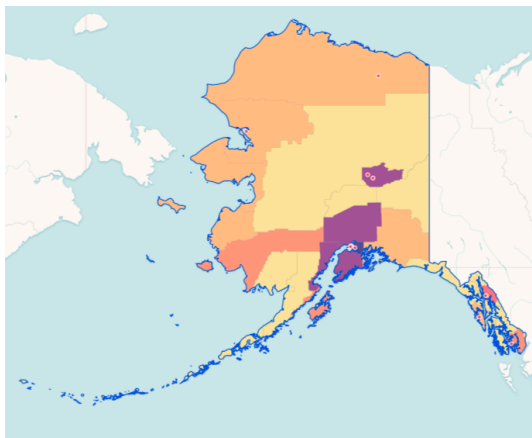
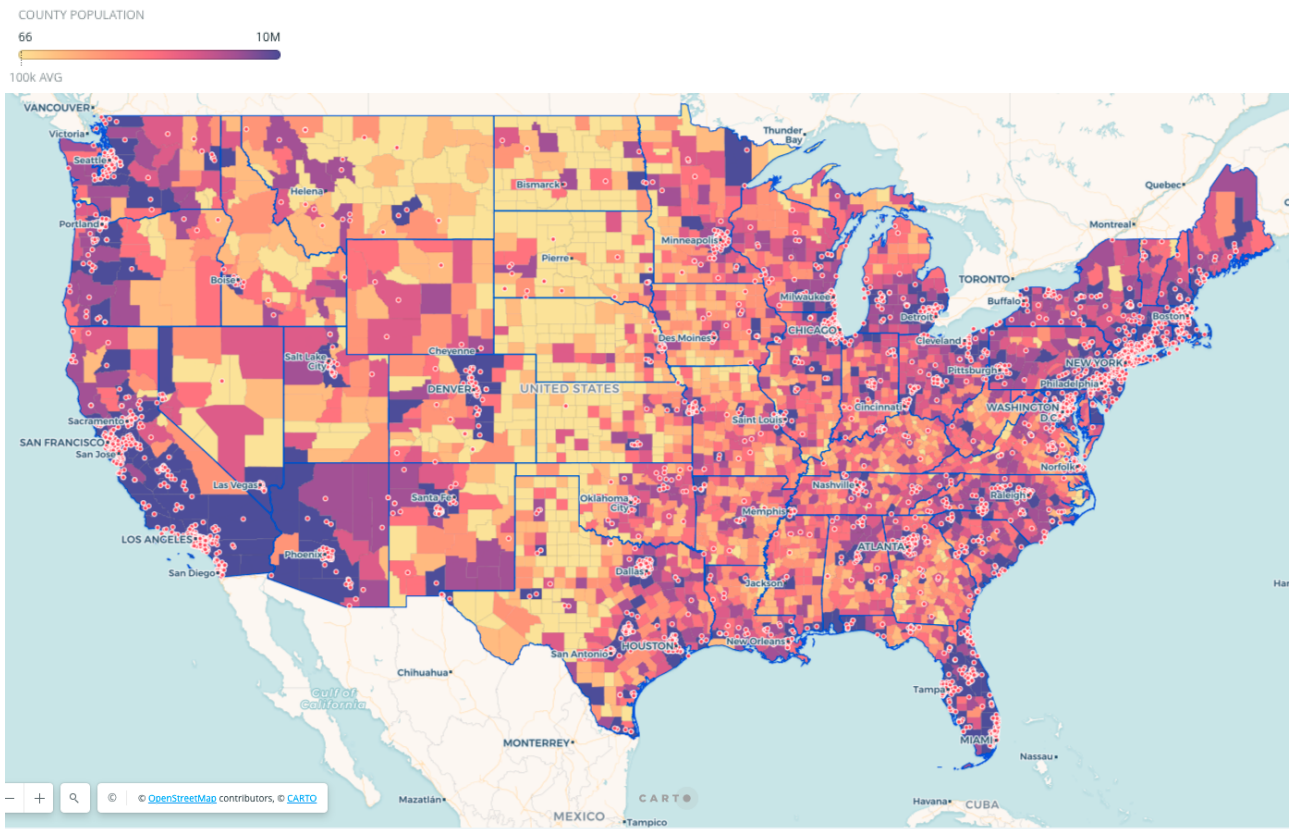
Type	Name	Assets
A23	SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER	398,660,714
A23	SAMUEL AND JEAN FRANKEL JEWISH HERITAGE FOUNDATION	172,162,547
A53	JEWISH MUSEUM	136,634,367
A23	POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER	111,740,191
A53	THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM	103,832,196
A53	NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY	99,565,868
A53	CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM	97,663,909
A23	HISPANIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA	83,450,476
A23	JAPAN SOCIETY INC	77,200,768
A53	EITELJORG MUSEUM OF AMERICAN INDIANS AND WESTERN ART	72,055,665
A53	THE MUSEUM FOR AFRICAN ART	71,934,109
A23	NORDIC HERITAGE MUSEUM	58,701,901
A23	NATIONAL YIDDISH BOOK CENTER INC	50,102,716
A53	JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM	49,402,192
A23	CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY INC	48,909,519
A23	ASIA SOCIETY TEXAS CENTER	48,162,143
A53	MINGEI INTERNATIONAL INC	42,169,356
A53	MUSEUM OF LATIN AMERICA ART	38,305,090
A23	AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE	31,678,486
A53	NATIONAL CZECH & SLOVAK MUSEUM & LIBRARY	30,776,019
A24	INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART FOUNDATION	29,501,304
A23	SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE	28,677,892
A23	COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION INC	28,371,151
A53	HEARD MUSEUM	27,598,376
A53	THE MEXICAN MUSEUM	26,832,854
A23	CHEROKEE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION INC	26,791,984
A23	ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES	26,220,304
A23	FRENCH INSTITUTE-ALLIANCE FRANCAISE	24,499,499
A23	THE AMERICAN IRELAND FUND	23,065,772
A23	QUEEN SOFIA SPANISH INSTITUTE INC	22,255,490
A23	ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER INC	20,273,132
A24	JOHN C CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL	17,510,395
A23	INDIAN LAND TENURE FOUNDATION	17,223,784
A53	NATIONAL HELLENIC MUSEUM	17,066,063
A53	VESTERHEIM NORWEGIAN AMERICAN MUSEUM	16,920,521
A23	TALLER PUERTORRIQUENO INC	16,749,804
A23	KANU O KA AINA LEARNING OHANA	16,718,360
A23	SOUTH COAST CHINESE CULTURAL ASSOCIATION	16,322,401
A53	UKRAINIAN MUSEUM	15,921,636
A23	AN CLAUDHEAMH SOLUIS INC	15,789,462
A53	DUSABLE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY INC	15,399,823

A24	BERKELEY SOCIETY FOR PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC	15,154,920
A23	TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION INC	15,070,094
A53	ARMENIAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF AMERICA INC	14,865,374
A23	JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII	14,737,522
A23	ARMENIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION	14,510,994
A23	PUNJABI CULTURAL SOCIETY OF CHICAGO	14,346,340
A23	TURKISH CULTURAL FOUNDATION	14,085,401
A53	TUBMAN AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM INC	12,871,404
A23	ASIAN ARTS INITIATIVE	12,806,378
A23	JAPANESE AMERICAN CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CENTER (LA)	11,593,350
A23	HAWAII UNITED OKINAWA ASSOCIATION	11,562,628
A23	JAPANESE CULTURAL & COMMUNITY CENTER OF NO. CALIFORNIA	11,040,263
A53	DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM	10,563,210
A53	AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM	10,508,628
A23	ARMENIAN GENERAL BENVOLENT UNION	10,178,414
A53	THE MUSEUM OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA	10,137,933
A23	RUSSIAN ARTS FOUNDATION	10,094,216
A23	NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION	10,040,453

Source: NCCS/IRS April 2020 BMF

Figure 4:
ECF organizations mapped by county-level population

US Counties and NCCS Orgs.



Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

The great ethnic and racial diversity of the U.S. population is reflected in the diverse ethnic affiliations of nonprofit Ethnic and Cultural organizations (see Table 2). However, the proportion of Ethnic and Cultural organizations affiliated with particular ethnic groups is uneven compared to the size of ethnic populations in the U.S. Asian/Pacific Island-affiliated and Native American-affiliated Ethnic and Cultural organizations over-represent Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American populations. (Note, in particular, that South Asian-affiliated Ethnic and Cultural organizations make up 15% of all Ethnic and Cultural organizations although South Asians make up just about 1.5% of the U.S. population.) Deepening past trends, Hispanic-affiliated Ethnic and Cultural organizations dramatically under-represent the Hispanic population.

Table 2:
Number and Share of Ethnic and Cultural organizations
by ethnic affiliation⁷

	Freq.	Percent
General	253	5.48%
General	171	3.70%
North American	82	1.77%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1702	36.84%
Pan Asian	635	13.74%
Central Asian	16	0.35%
Pacific Islander	89	1.93%
South Asian	714	15.45%
Southeast Asian	248	5.37%
Black/African American	701	15.17%
African	330	7.14%
African American	275	5.95%
Caribbean	96	2.08%
European	1,098	23.77%
Hispanic/Latin American	272	5.89%
Middle Eastern	259	5.61%
Native American	281	6.08%
Other	54	1.17%
Australian/New Zealander	2	0.04%
Jewish	46	1.00%
Other	6	0.13%
Total	4,620	100.0%

Source: Kim 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset

Comparing these findings to those reported in Rosenstein (2006), it appears that South Asian-affiliated, Black/African American-affiliated, and Middle Eastern-affiliated Ethnic and Cultural organizations have gained share in the subsector over the period since 2001. This tracks with significant increases in immigration to the U.S. from South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East over the same period. There also have been significant increases in immigration to the U.S. from Central and South America over that period, but Hispanic-affiliated Ethnic and Cultural organizations have lost share in the subsector since 2001, moving from 9% in 2001 to just around 6% in 2020. In recent years, we see particularly strong growth among Asian/Pacific Island-affiliated organizations, among European-affiliated organizations, and, to a lesser extent, among Black/African American-affiliated organizations (see Table 2).

Because the expression of ethnic and cultural heritage and identity rests at the center of the work of ECFs, this subsector is particularly relevant to BIPOC people and it is worthwhile to examine where ECFs are located in relation to BIPOC populations. Approximately 20% of ECFs are located in zip codes where a minority of the population is White. In the U.S., only around 9% of all zip codes are minority White, indicating that ECFs have a pronounced tendency to locate in majority BIPOC zip codes. Nonetheless, there are areas around the country with large BIPOC populations and few ECFs.

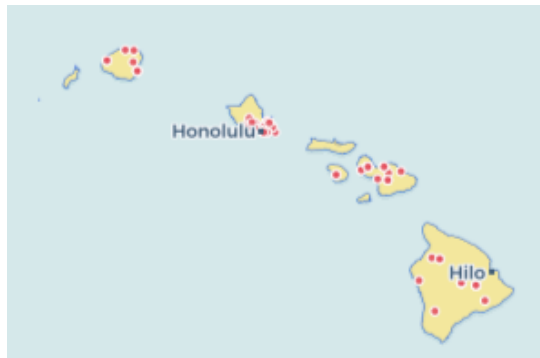
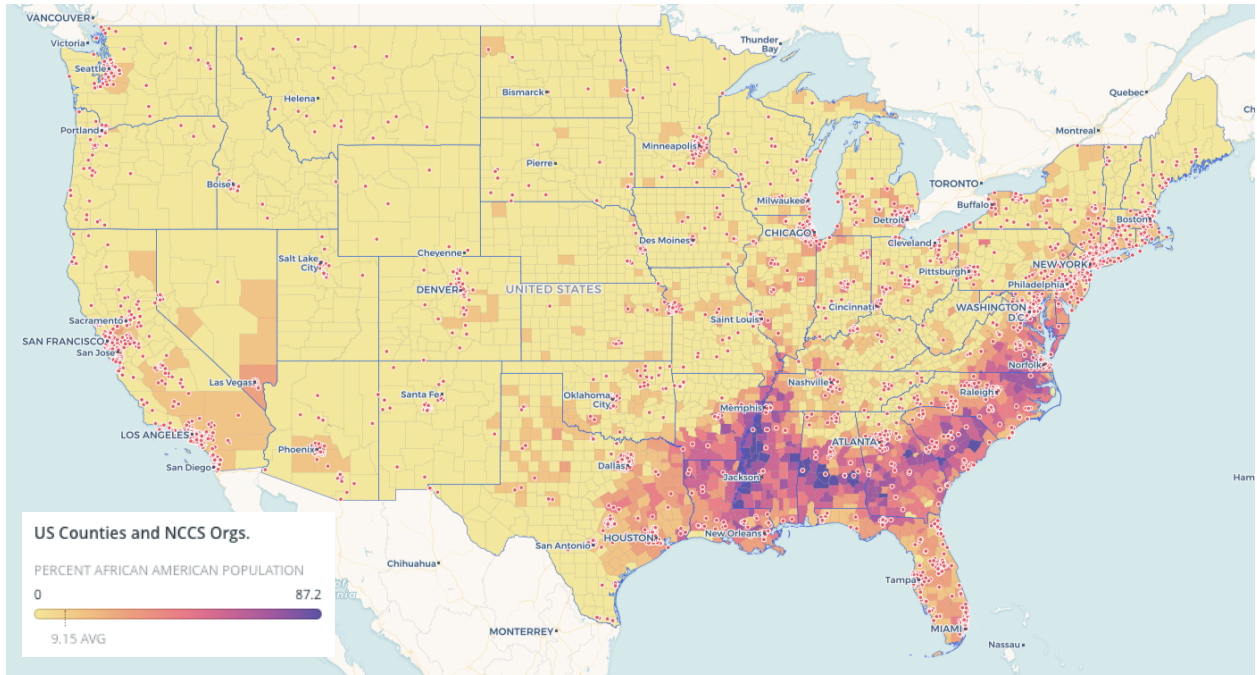
As indicated in Figure 5, there are areas in the deep South where the percentage of the population made up by Black/African American people is very high and where there are virtually no ECFs. This is strikingly apparent in fairly rural areas of Mississippi and eastern Arkansas but the pattern appears throughout the South from all the way from Virginia to Louisiana.

As indicated in Figure 6, across the deepest Southwest, in Texas, New Mexico, southernmost Arizona, and the southern California interior, the percentage of the population that is Hispanic is very high and there are very few ECFs. In counties where Hispanic populations are highest, there are virtually no ECFs.

As indicated in Figure 7, ECFs are found in areas of the continental U.S. where the percentage of the population that is Native American is high, with the exception of North Dakota, where there are many Native American people and few ECFs. In Alaska, a very high percentage of the population is Native American and there are very few ECFs. All of the areas where Native Americans make up a large percentage of the population are rural or very rural.

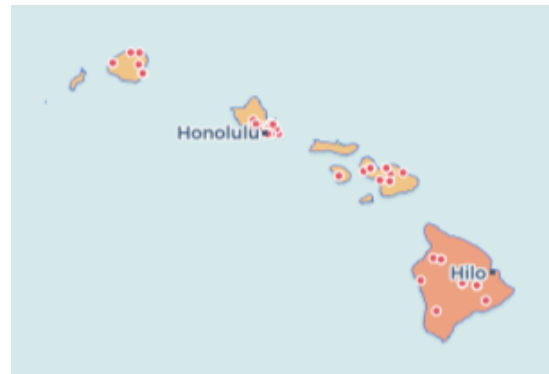
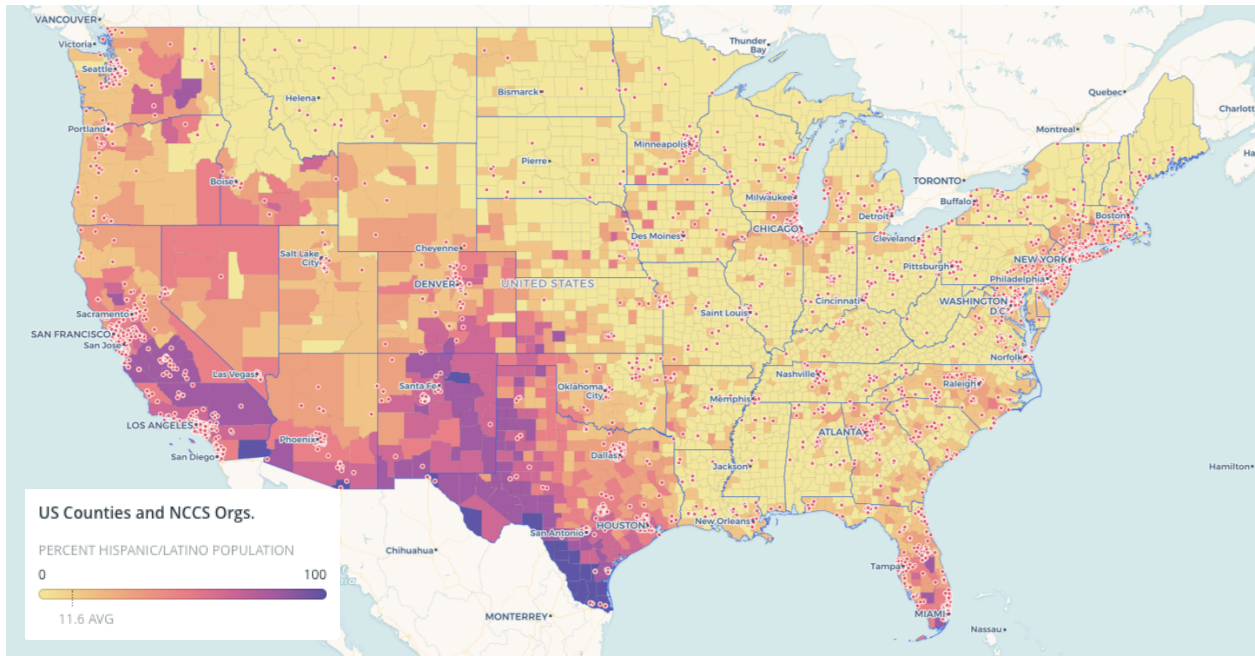
ECFs appear to be well-populated in areas where Asian American/Pacific Islanders make up a high percentage of the population.

Figure 5:
ECF organizations mapped by county-level percent African American Population



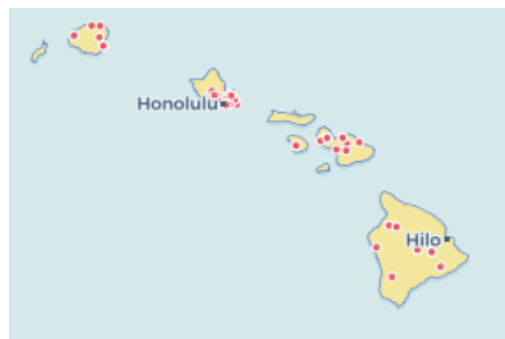
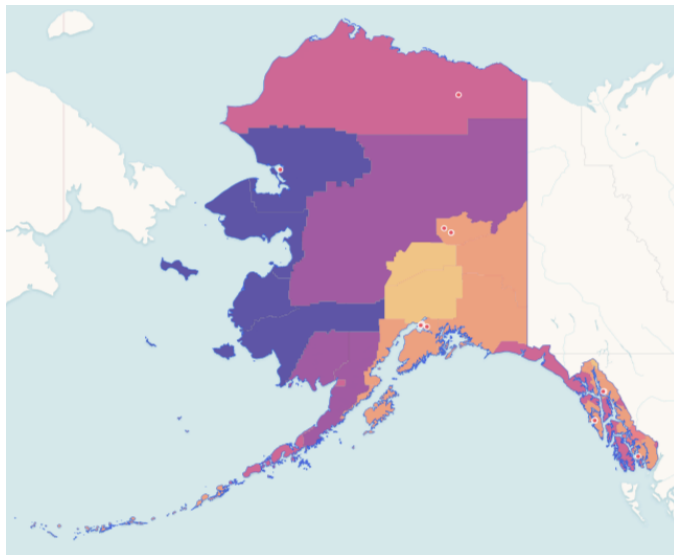
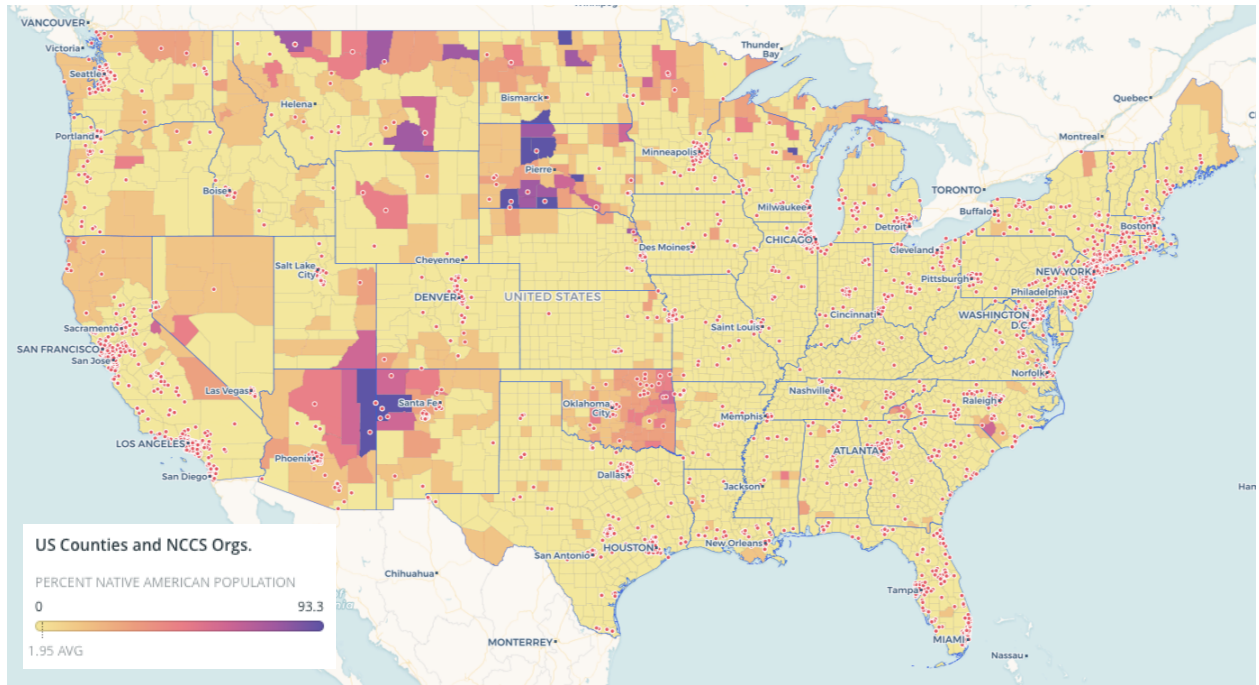
Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

Figure 6:
ECF organizations mapped by county-level percent Hispanic Population



Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

Figure 7:
ECF organizations mapped by county-level percent Native American Population

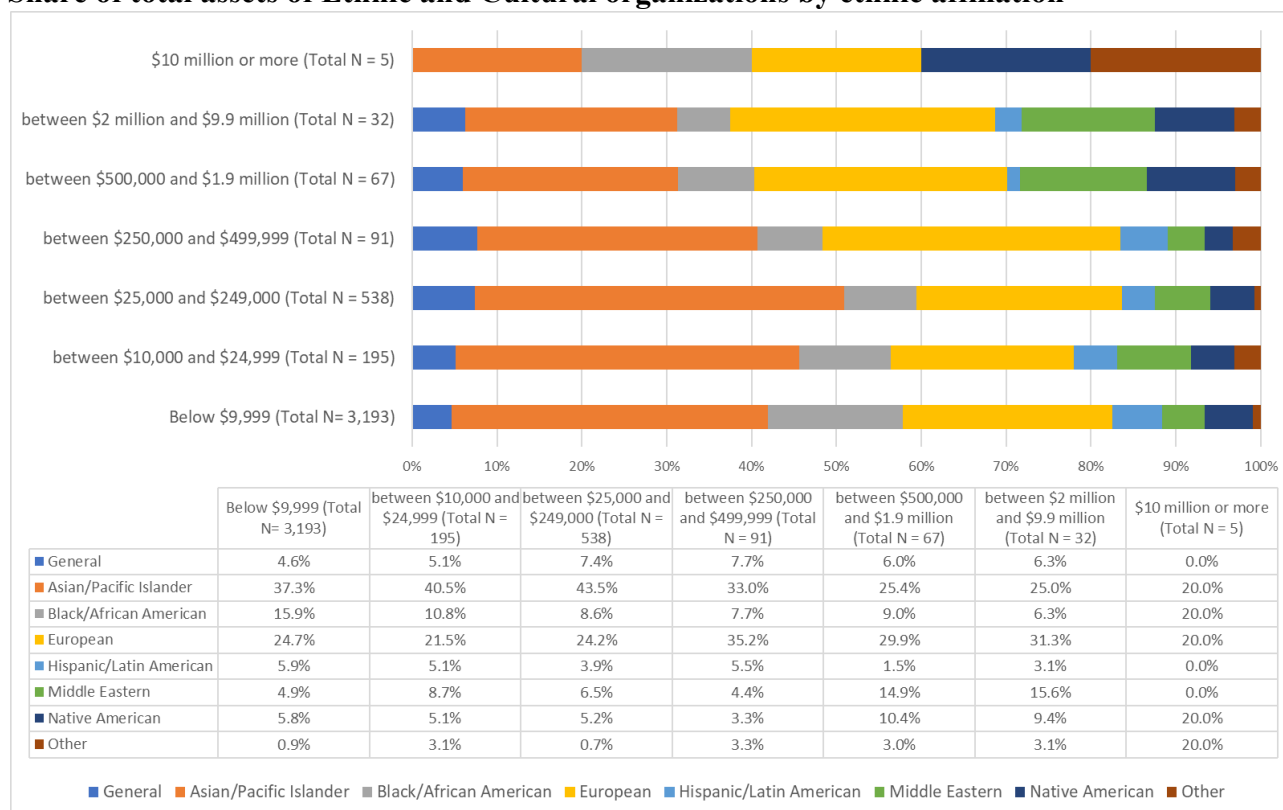


Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

Because a lack of ECFs may mean that a community is underserved, it was important to check the distribution of ECFs in relation to income level and poverty in communities as well. Around 45% of ECFs are located in zip codes where there is significant poverty.⁸

Looking at the shares of total assets by the ethnic affiliation of ECFs brings other aspects of the distribution of resources in the subsector into focus. Figure 8 shows that compared to other Ethnic and Cultural organizations, Middle Eastern-affiliated, Native American-affiliated, and Other organizations (this category includes Jewish- and Yiddish-affiliated organizations) have a tendency toward larger, asset-heavier organizations. Hispanic-affiliated organizations, on the other hand, have comparatively few large and very large organizations. Mid-sized Black/African American organizations are comparatively underdeveloped. Asian/Pacific Island-affiliated and European-affiliated organizations show fairly even development across asset categories.

Figure 8:
Share of total assets of Ethnic and Cultural organizations by ethnic affiliation



Source: Kim 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset

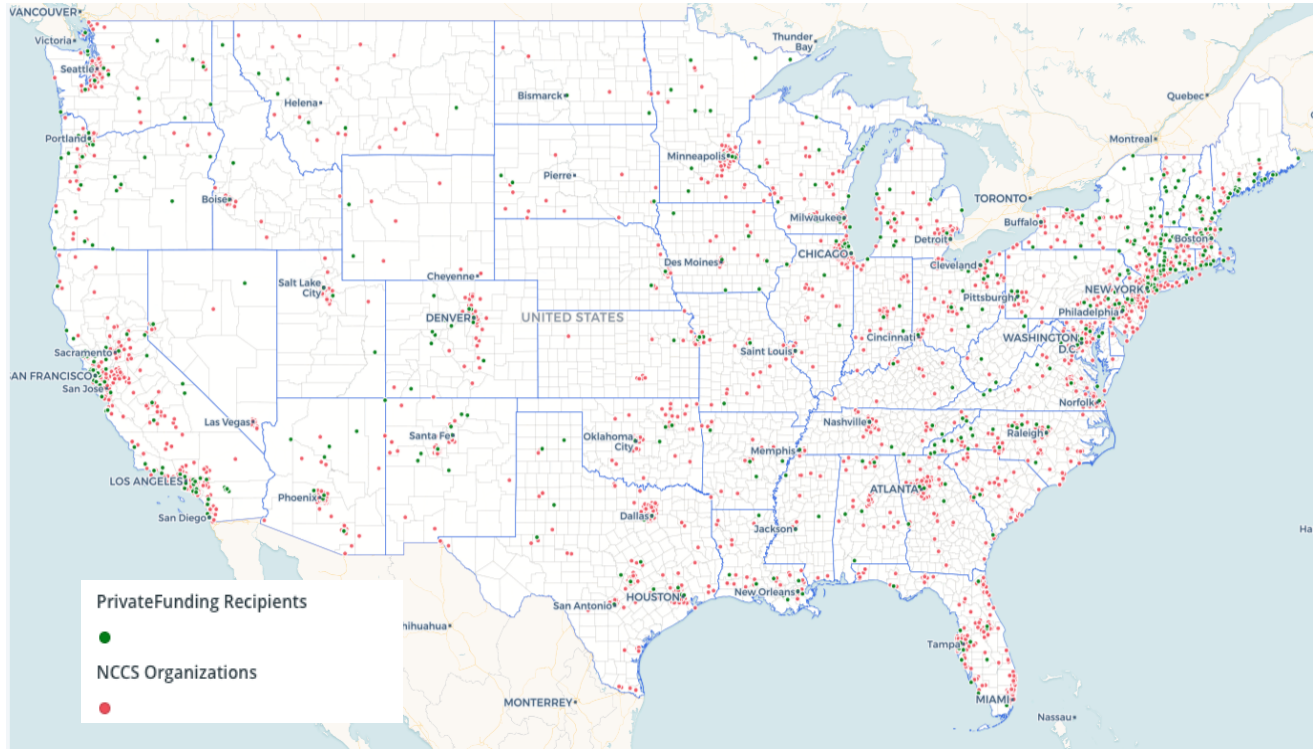
FUNDING TO THE NONPROFIT CULTURE SUBSECTOR: A SNAPSHOT

Foundation funding to this subsector totaled just over \$120.6 million in 2018. To provide some context for that number: Candid (formerly known as the Foundation Center/GuideStar) reports that dollars from grants greater than \$10,000 given to organizations in the Arts, Culture and Humanities from the largest 1,000 foundations in the U.S. totaled nearly \$3 billion in 2018 and estimates that this represents about half of total giving in the sector (Mukaiu 2021). If we extrapolate from those estimates, that would mean that the nonprofit Culture subsector received approximately 2% of foundation funding in the sector in 2018. An important caveat for this estimate is: it appears that the set of organizations that are identified by Candid as recipients of foundation funding to nonprofit Culture do not have a great deal of overlap with the ECFs that we have identified as making up the subsector (see Figure 9). This is likely the case because, compared to the way we have defined the subsector, Candid's classifications are much more narrowly focused on Craft and the Traditional Arts.

In 2018, 53% of private foundation funding to the subsector went to the top ten grant recipients. Among the largest grantees, The American Craftsman Museum received just over \$12 million from its single-organization support foundation, Two Red Roses (see Table 3 and Table 4). The Windgate Foundation gave a very large one-time grant of more than \$25 million to the Penland School of Craft in North Carolina to build their endowment⁹ and gave another large grant of \$5.7 million to the Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design in Asheville, NC. The resources of the Windgate Foundation come from the Walton family and Walmart. Substantial giving by the NoVo Foundation was spread more broadly across the subsector. The resources of the NoVo Foundation come from the Buffet family.

A remaining 47% of private grantmaking, approximately \$57 million, was left to be divided among more than 950 grantees. These grants tended to be small. The average foundation grant awarded in nonprofit Culture was \$9,000, the median was \$7,500. In the great majority of U.S. states, private giving to the subsector totaled less \$3 million (see Figure 11). Across the country, it appears that private funding aligns closely with number of organizations; places with more nonprofit Culture organizations tend to have more nonprofit Culture organizations that are foundation grantees. However, as indicated in Figure 10, a few states – South Carolina, Alabama, Oklahoma, and Mississippi – do not demonstrate this correlation between number of organizations and number of foundation-funded organizations, and more existing organizations are going without private funding.

**Figure 9:
ECFs and 2018 Foundation Grants mapped by State**



Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

Table 3:
Ten Largest Private Funders of Nonprofit Culture, 2018
Grantmaker **Grants in \$**

Windgate Charitable Foundation	32,855,394
NoVo Foundation	17,437,500
Two Red Roses the Foundation	12,031,090
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation	6,242,250
The Manton Foundation	2,000,000
National Philanthropic Trust	1,746,800
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	1,741,333
Tides Foundation	1,200,000
Bradley-Turner Foundation	1,059,379
The James Irvine Foundation	1,035,000
TOTAL	\$ 77,348,746

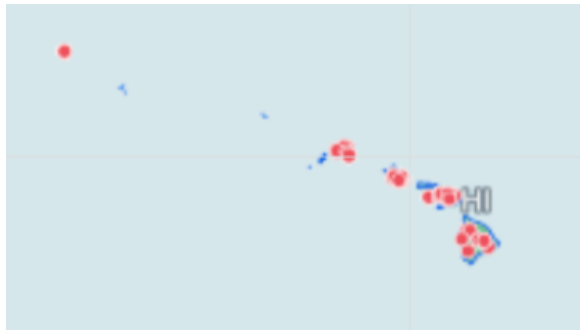
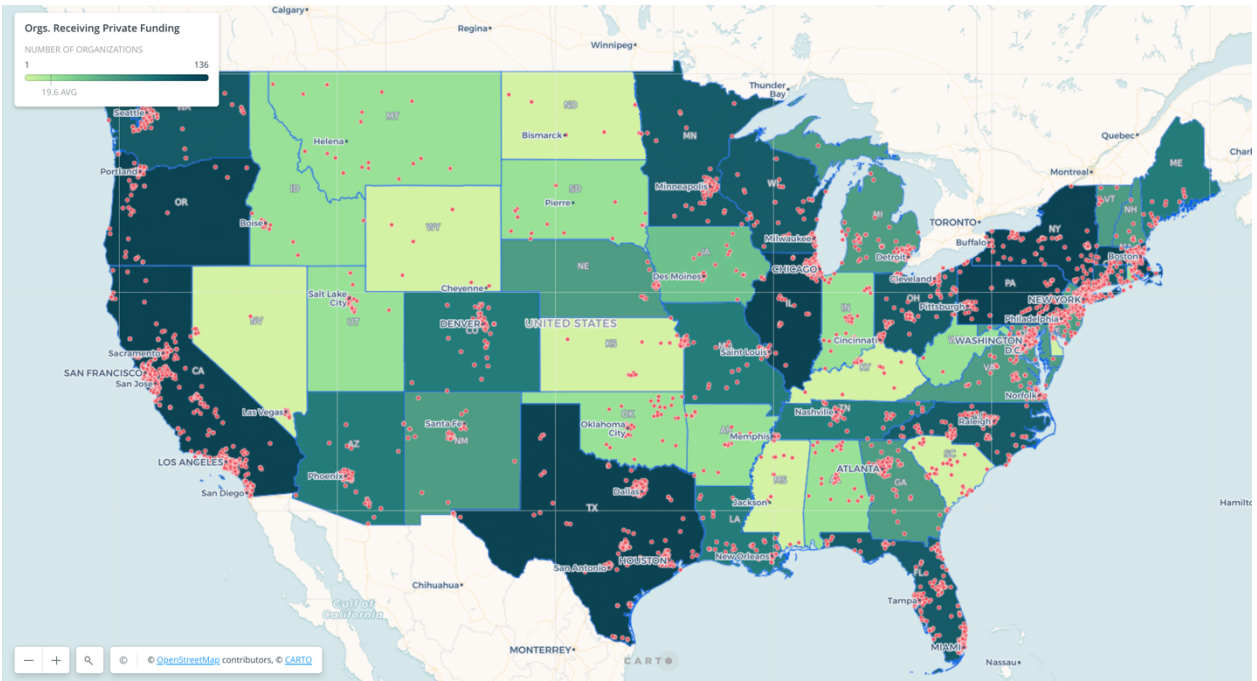
Source: NCCS IRS April 2020 BMF

Table 4:
Top Ten Recipients of Private Funding, 2018
Recipient **City** **State** **\$ Received**

Penland School of Crafts	Penland	NC	27,019,777
American Craftsman Museum	Palm Harbor	FL	12,031,090
Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design	Asheville	NC	6,523,201
Rudolf Steiner Foundation	San Francisco	CA	3,900,000
Native American Community Academy	Albuquerque	NM	3,750,000
North Bennet Street School	Boston	MA	3,716,490
Worldwide Indigenous Science Network	Lahaina	HI	2,250,000
Aspen Music Festival and School	Aspen	CO	1,746,254
Creative Learning	Washington	DC	1,656,193
Tewa Women United	Santa Cruz	NM	1,456,897
TOTAL			64,049,902

Source: NCCS IRS April 2020 BMF

Figure 10:
NCCS Organizations and 2018 Private Funding Grantees by State

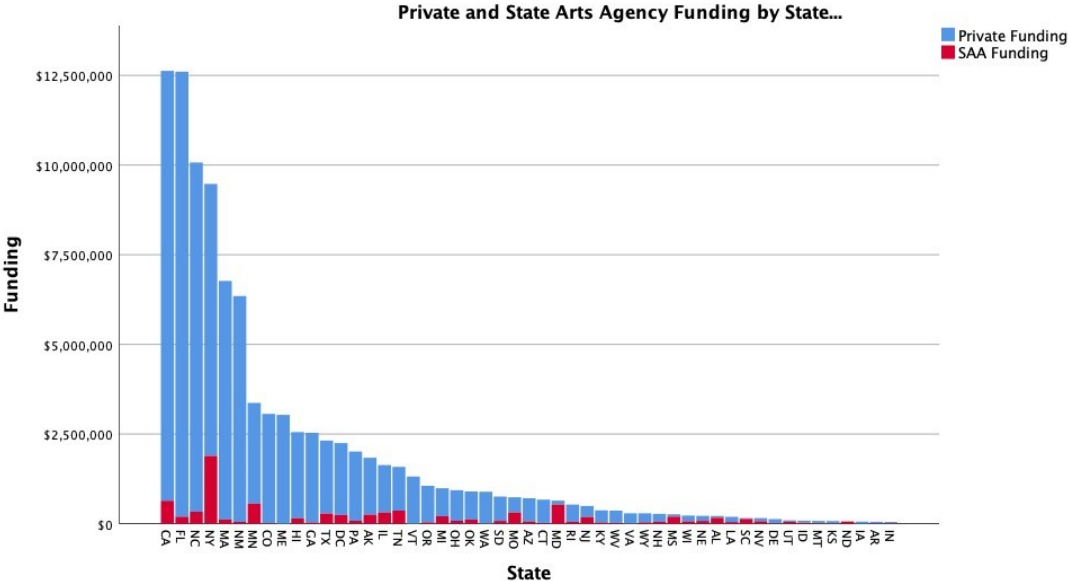


Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

State Arts Agency (SAA) grants to nonprofit Culture totaled around \$8.3 million in 2018. As Figure 11 shows, private funding to the subsector dwarfs state-level public funding. However, it is important to note that in a handful of states – Maryland, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, North Dakota – state-level public funding appears to be making up the majority or the totality of funding in the subsector. (It would be useful to add federal funding levels to this assessment, so that we can have a better idea of total resources flowing to the subsector at the state level.)

State Arts Agency grants to the subsector tend to be very small: in 23 states and territories, the median grant was \$2,500 or less (see Table 5). The median SAA grant was greater than \$10,000 in only 6 states: California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, District of Columbia, and Michigan. DC gave the largest median grant amount of \$23,767. The unevenness in funding levels to nonprofit Culture is striking when we look at state-level public funding per capita (see Figure 12). The unevenness is characteristic of cultural funding in the U.S., which is highly federalist, that is, primarily driven by policies in the individual states rather than by any centralized, national policy.

Figure 11:
SAA v. Private funding for Nonprofit Culture by State, 2018



Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

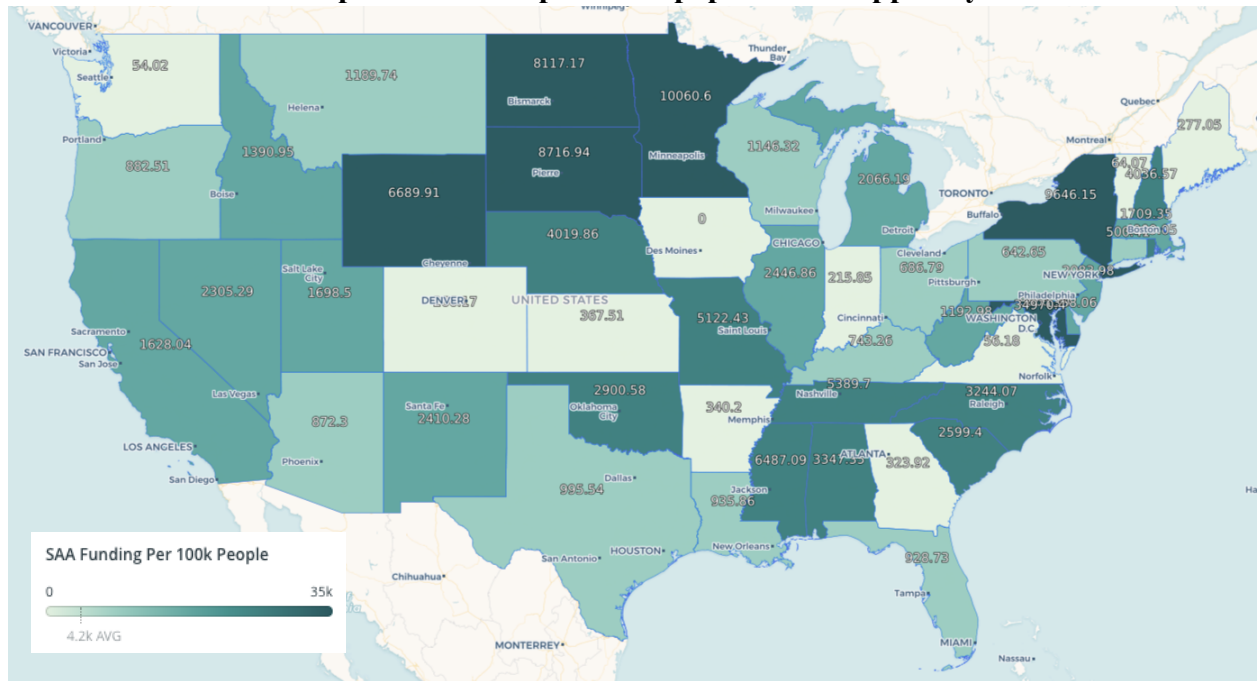
**Table 5:
2018 SAA funding to Nonprofit Culture by State: Total dollars, number of grantees,
unique grantees, median, mean**

State	Total SAA Funding \$	# of Grants	Unique Grantees	Median Grant \$	Mean Grant \$
AK	249,639	31	25	3,500	8,053
AL	163,225	43	36	2,000	3,796
AR	10,204	6	5	1,641	1,701
AZ	61,500	10	10	4,500	6,150
CA	639,553	50	37	13,000	12,791
CO	14,933	3	3	4,000	4,978
CT	17,890	4	4	2,845	4,473
DC	242,234	6	4	23,767	40,372
DE	13,000	4	3	1,000	3,250
FL	194,120	12	11	20,000	16,177
GA	33,700	7	7	5,000	4,814
GU	29,250	5	5	5,250	5,850
HI	148,249	12	12	7,977	12,354
IA	0	0	0	0	0
ID	23,893	11	11	3,000	2,172
IL	312,480	45	42	3,000	6,944
IN	14,388	4	4	3,000	3,597
KS	10,697	4	3	2,199	2,674
KY	33,068	11	11	3,000	3,006
LA	43,652	12	11	2,500	3,638
MA	117,100	34	29	1,000	3,444
MD	533,471	72	69	2,500	7,409
ME	3,700	1	1	3,700	3,700
MI	205,901	9	8	17,500	22,878
MN	559,708	35	31	10,18	15,992
MO	312,720	29	29	5,291	10,783

MS	193,602	33	31	3,044	5,867
MT	12,500	5	5	3,000	2,500
NC	333,000	24	24	8,000	13,875
ND	61,424	20	20	2,500	3,071
NE	76,963	14	12	4,708	5,497
NH	54,418	23	20	2,300	2,366
NJ	185,026	12	8	17,124	15,419
NM	50,434	15	15	3,808	3,362
NV	68,522	18	18	2,159	3,807
NY	1,887,97	98	63	11,500	19,265
OH	80,048	18	18	3,637	4,447
OK	114,076	31	20	2,500	3,680
OR	36,446	6	5	6,841	6,074
PA	82,205	15	13	4,517	5,480
PR	1,200	1	1	1,200	1,200
RI	51,900	21	20	2,150	2,471
SC	130,511	18	15	2,000	7,251
SD	75,893	43	25	778	1,765
TN	361,614	42	32	4,090	8,610
TX	281,348	157	106	1,215	1,792
UT	52,600	18	17	1,838	2,922
VA	4,750	2	2	2,375	2,375
VI	5,000	3	3	1,500	1,667
VT	400	1	1	400	400
WA	4,000	1	1	4,000	4,000
WI	66,380	20	19	3,500	3,319
WV	21,680	3	3	4,680	7,227
WY	38,870	16	15	1,600	2,429
TOTAL	8,321,060	1138	943	3,000	7,312

Source: National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Figure 12:
2018 SAA dollars to nonprofit Culture per 100K population mapped by State



Source: Vakharia 2021 analysis of ACTA dataset.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the lasting characteristics, priorities, and challenges that were identified in the existing literature together with the reiterations and insight added by key findings of this new study, we recommend the following actions.

- **Build and come to consensus around better understandings of Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations and the nonprofit Culture subsector they help to populate.**

One reason that quantitative data on and analysis of this important subsector is scarce is a lack of clearly articulated definitions and classifications of the organizations that populate it. When classifications are unclear or redundant, it is hard to figure out where to put organizations and data about them will be less than useful without labor-intensive cleaning. This is important because it can reinforce inequities; we end up with easy-to-use, higher quality data on mainstream activities and organizations and messy data on everything else. A first step in this direction would be to advocate across the nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector and in the community of grantmakers in the Arts for better recognition of a distinct set of organizations that intentionally and self-consciously understand their engagement with arts, cultural, and humanities activity as a way to express and sustain cultural heritage, identity, and community. Clarified and shared understandings are even more important in the current context where increasing attention is being paid to racial and ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector because the set of organizations studied here often is simply and inaccurately assumed to be the same as Arts Organizations of Color.

- **When studying and working in this subsector, always use measures and tools specially fitted for small and very small organizations.**

The great majority of Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations are small and very small. To understand the subsector, it must be studied in ways that include and illuminate those organizations. Mainstream approaches to counting and measuring nonprofit organizations tend to focus on larger organizations, often those with assets greater than \$100,000; such approaches are fundamentally inadequate here. Further, intervention in the health and well-being of this subsector will require policy and administrative tools specifically fitted for small and very small organizations. Policymakers and planners should regularly measure whether it appears that some small organizations in the subsector are growing, how many and what type are doing so (Toepler 2002). However, these and other financial assessments and initiatives must take account of the fact that most ECFs are small and very small. Identifying and developing tools tailored specially to the financial practices and challenges of small nonprofit Culture organizations is vital to the long-term health of the subsector.¹⁰

- **Establish initiatives to better understand and fill gaps in service, making Hispanic populations and Black populations in the South a priority.**

It has been clearly established in multiple studies that the Hispanic population of the U.S. is underrepresented by ECFs. Initiatives targeted to closing this gap should be developed and provided with targeted funding. Initiatives targeted to ensuring service to Black populations in

the South also should be prioritized. These actions would benefit from some additional research. Perhaps these populations tend to undertake cultural activities in other sorts of nonprofit organizations? Or outside the nonprofit sector? How might those activities be supported by existing ECFs and philanthropy? Also, it would be valuable to gain a better understanding of how growth and share in the subsector relate to immigration. What roles do ECFs play for immigrants? When and why do immigrant communities tend to begin developing and formalizing ECFs? Do the ECFs created by immigrants differ from the ECFs of longstanding ethnic communities? How do they differ (e.g., in terms of programming, finances, funding sources, networks)? We know that participation in the Arts aligns strongly with educational attainment and is becoming more strongly aligned with household income. Does the development of ECFs appear to align with educational attainment and income as well? If so, does that appear to be true among all ethnic populations? Some of these questions can be addressed using quantitative data but answering them fully will require that we add other approaches.

- **Drill down on the finances of ECFs before establishing funding criteria or funding priorities in the subsector.**

It would be very useful to know a lot more about the high level of “churn” among ECFs before doing large scale new funding here. How much of this “churn” is the product of financial vulnerability?¹¹ How much represents needs being met or projects coming to completion? How much is the product of mergers or absorption into the public sector? Which organizations survive? Because we found clear evidence that there are many, many organizations in the subsector that never receive funding from private foundations or government, it would be helpful as well as to carefully examine those that have received either or, especially, both forms of support. How do funded ECFs differ from other organizations in the subsector? Do they hold lessons for organizations that would wish to grow?

- **Foster an approach to public funding that is intentional about balancing the distribution of resources flowing to the subsector**

Stark unevenness in the geographies of both private and public funding suggests that some nation-wide effort to intentionally target attention toward gaps is warranted. There are places where nonprofit Culture infrastructure exists but funding is very weak. Although dwarfed in terms of total dollars compared to private funding, we know that public funding is distinctively important to this subsector and public funders should lead such an initiative. The NEA *Living Traditions* report, recommendations, and other actions such as its related support for building a regionally-structured National Folklife Network are ideal examples of the necessary sort of leadership, nation-wide in scope. In this effort, a regularly occurring assessment of funding to the subsector would be highly beneficial. The funding data presented here can serve as a benchmark for comparison in future years. Of course, it would be ideal for such a regular review to take stock of federal funding to the subsector in addition to foundation and state-level government funding. This could help policymakers and subsector leaders to understand where there are gaps in overall funding for the existing nonprofit Culture infrastructure and, perhaps more important, where public sector funding is needed to fill critical gaps in private sector giving.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Data on nonprofit Ethnic, Cultural, and Folk organizations was drawn from the April 2020 IRS Business Master File (BMF), the most recent cumulative file available. The BMF contains basic information taken from IRS Form 1023 for all registered and “active” tax-exempt organizations. Form 1023 is used by 501c3 organizations when applying for recognition of their tax-exempt status. The BMF provides information such as location, IRS ruling year, income, and assets from the most recent Form 990.

From the April 2020 BMF file, we pulled organizations within the primary scope of interest for this study. These include organizations tagged using the following National Taxonomy of Exempt Entity (NTEE) codes:

- **A23 Cultural & Ethnic Awareness:** Organizations that promote artistic expression within a particular ethnic community; work for the preservation and promotion of the traditions, values and lifestyles of different cultural groups; organize activities and events which promote cultural exchange locally or nationally; and encourage understanding and respect for different cultural heritages among the youthful members of the group as well as the mainstream population.
- **A24 Folk Arts:** Organizations that produce, promote and disseminate information on traditional music, dance, theater or folklore of various cultures and organizations that perform, present and support folk art in a specific region.
- **A27 Community Celebrations:** Organizations that are engaged in the promotion, production or performance of community and public celebratory events.
- **A53 Folk Arts Museums:** Specialized museums, foundations, and other organizations whose activities and collections preserve and promote the culture and history of a specific nationality, or racial or ethnic group, e.g., Native Americans.¹²

Our dataset did not include any of the nearly 4,000 *N52 Festivals* organizations that are included in the April 2020 BMF. NTEE defines festivals as a part of the nonprofit Leisure and Recreation sector rather than the nonprofit Arts, Culture, and Humanities sector. Although most organizations tagged N52 rightfully should be classified as *A27 Community Celebrations* and thus be counted a part of the nonprofit Culture subsector, cleaning and reclassifying that large number of organizations was beyond the scope of this project.

Out of this larger set, we created a distinct dataset of *A23 Ethnic and Cultural Heritage Organizations* and *A27 Community Celebration Organizations* that obtained their IRS tax-exempt status between January 2005 and February 2020. We found just eight A27s, so this dataset should be seen to reflect the A23 classification. The filtering by timeframe was done for several reasons. First, and most importantly, these are classifications characterized by a great deal of “churn”, i.e., organizations are introduced and pass away at high frequency in these classifications. This “churn” means that our attention and resources are best focused on a fairly close horizon in terms of timeframe. Second, the earlier Urban Institute report (Rosenstein 2006) gave us a good idea of the state of these organizations during an earlier period. Finally, A23 organizations are frequently misclassified and so records in this classification require extensive and careful cleaning. We needed a strategy to narrow the number of organizations that we would

check to ensure data quality and reliability. Almost half of the A23 organizations originally pulled from the BMF file were deemed out-of-scope or defunct during our cleaning process, resulting in a clean set comprising a total of 4,620 records.

Compared to A23 organizations, A24s and A53s tend to be larger, longer-lasting, easier to code, and there are fewer of them. So, among the A24 and A53 classifications, we examined organizations born in all years, not just those that obtained their status during the more recent period from 2005-2020. Because we took two different approaches to building the datasets and because the scope of the A23s dwarfs all other types of organizations in this study, we have been careful to analyze and (where necessary) report on the datasets separately.

We estimate that something like 7,250 nonprofit Ethnic and Cultural organizations currently are operating in the U.S. Because of the approach we took to cleaning the dataset for this study, we can only put forward an estimate of the number of nonprofit Ethnic and Cultural organizations currently in operation. Our clean dataset of Ethnic and Cultural organizations that obtained their IRS tax-exempt status between January 2005 and February 2020 comprises 4,620 records. To estimate all organizations, we must add to that some estimate of the total number of organizations that: obtained their IRS tax-exempt status before January 2005, continue to be active, and are tagged A23 or A27 and actually belong in this classification. In the April 2020 BMF, the number of organizations tagged A23 and A27 that obtained their IRS tax-exempt status before January 2005 is approximately 6,500. Based on the cleaning operations undertaken for the 2005 Urban Institute study and those undertaken for this study, we would estimate that approximately 60% of those organizations are misclassified or defunct. A brief review of the records seems to confirm that estimate. Therefore, to estimate the likely number of nonprofit Ethnic and Cultural Organizations in operation and born in all years, we must supplement our set of 4,620 with an additional estimated 2,600 records (40% of 6,500). This results in our estimate of approximately 7,250 nonprofit Ethnic and Cultural Organizations in operation.

Data on Foundation funding was drawn from Candid's Foundation Directory Online. We created a dataset of all 2018 grants to organizations identified with the following subject area tags:

- **“Traditional Knowledge”**: The cumulative body of knowledge, practices and representations maintained, developed and often collectively owned by regional, indigenous or local peoples distinguishing one community from another, helping to define its cultural and spiritual identity, with extended histories of interaction with and accumulated empirical observation of the natural environment, encompassing language, naming and classification systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality and worldview and more specifically including traditional technologies of subsistence, midwifery, ethnobotany and ecological knowledge, celestial navigation, ethnoastronomy and the climate, crucial for survival. Oral history, in the form of stories, proverbs, legends, folklore, ritual, songs and laws, often plays a significant role.
- **“Folk Arts”**: Promotion, production or performance of art forms that were developed as a part of the history, culture, religion, language or work of a particular region or people and passed from generation to generation as a part of their traditions. Included are: Production, promotion and dissemination of information on traditional music, dance, theater or folklore of various cultures. National, regional, state and local groups that

present, sell or teach various folk art forms (tool-making, crafts, sewing, smocking, basket weaving, batik/tie die, origami, harmonica, etc.).

- **“Folk and Ethnic Dance”**: Promotion, production or performance of forms of dance that were developed as part of the history, culture, religion of a particular region or people that is passed from generation to generation as part of a tradition. See also Folk arts.
- **“Folk and Indigenous Music”**: Promotion, production or performance of forms of music that were developed as part of the history, culture or religion of a particular region or people that is passed from generation to generation as part of a tradition. See also Folk arts.¹³

Grants are given subject area tags by Candid, not by grantmakers. 2018 is the most recent year for which up-to-date information is available in the Foundation Directory. De-duplication and cleaning of null and out-of-scope records resulted in a dataset comprising 1,000 records.

Data on State Arts Agency funding of folklife, living cultural heritage, and traditional arts was provided by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). NASAA uses the National Standard for Arts Information exchange classifications to identify arts grantmaking and activities. We requested a dataset of all 2018 grants to organizations and programs tagged with code 12: “Folk/Traditional Arts”:

Pertaining to oral, customary, material and performance traditions informally learned and transmitted in contexts characteristic of ethnic, religious, linguistic, occupational, and/or regional groups. For dance, music, crafts/visual arts and oral traditions that meet the above criteria, use subcodes 12A-D. For other folklife or traditional art forms not itemized below (such as specific occupational art, vernacular architecture, folk/traditional theater or other performing art forms), use the main code of 12. Do not include folk-inspired forms (for example, interpretations of ethnic/folk dance or music by artists outside the particular ethnic/folk tradition should be coded 01B or 02E, respectively.)

A folk/traditional dance

B music

C crafts & visual arts

D oral traditions (include folk/traditional storytelling).¹⁴

2018 is the most recent year for which complete NASAA data is available.¹⁵ De-duplicating resulted in a dataset of 1,138 grants to 943 unique grantees.

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NOTES

¹ *Cultural Centers of Color* broadly surveyed organizations that they thought might be appropriate for inclusion in their dataset. “Of the 1,728 respondents, 543 reported that more than 50 percent of their participants - board, staff, artists, and audience - were either African American, Asian American, Latino American, or Native American (or a combination of these groups)”. Those 543 were included in their report (Bowles 1992:13). Today, many of these organizations probably would be termed *Arts Organizations of Color*. Just 24 of the 543 organizations were identified as “folk arts” organizations (Bowles 1992: 25).

² cf, Voss et al. (2016). The dataset for the Voss et al. study includes only organizations from the NCAR database at DataArts. Those are organizations that have *applied for funding* and are likely to be larger organizations. NCCS includes a greater pool of organizations, including small organizations; the BMF is its most inclusive database.

³ Rosenstein also found that Black/African American populations are underrepresented by ECFs. However, that finding conflicts with *Cultural Centers of Color*. The conflict could be the result of differences between the organizations included in the two datasets or the result of changes in the subsector between 1992 and 2005.

⁴ Roeger, Blackwood and Pettijohn. *The Nonprofit Almanac 2012*.

⁵ This is an estimate. For more detailed information, see the Methodological Appendix.

⁶ *Living Traditions* (2019) also identified these as areas in need of development.

⁷ The South Asian classification includes organizations affiliated with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and in certain contexts Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Maldives, and Tibet. The Southeast Asian classification includes organizations affiliated with Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Central Asian classifications includes organizations affiliated with Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

⁸ We define these as zip codes where the ratio of income to poverty level is below 2 for more than 30% of the population.

⁹ Confirmed by personal communication (Rosenstein 2021).

¹⁰ For an example, see the Equity Loan Builder Program - <https://www.propelnonprofits.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Equity-Builder-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

¹¹ For example, according to a detailed study of nonprofit BIPOC Arts organizations in Minnesota, the “level of unrestricted cash is significantly lower for culturally specific [arts] organizations than for mainstream [arts] organizations of similar budget size in the same sector. The same is true for their level of unrestricted current assets” (propel nonprofits 2017). A financial portfolio like this can translate into serious vulnerability.

¹² <https://nccs.urban.org/publication/irs-activity-codes>

¹³ <https://taxonomy.candid.org/subjects>

¹⁴ <https://nasaa-arts.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/12/NationalStandardReferenceGuide2015.pdf>,

p. 18.

¹⁵ With one exception: the most recent NASAA data for the state of California was from 2017.

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