



Economic Impact of Rhode Island's Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations: A 1998 Update

Some Background

The updated information reported in the table below indicates that non-profit cultural organizations in Rhode Island saw their spending rise by 2.45 percent and their revenue rise by 7.17 percent between 1997 and 1998. It should be noted that one large organization in Rhode Island reported more than doubling its revenues and expenditures between 1997 and 1998; this result so skewed the overall results that the organization had to be dropped from the sample in both years. Although the 1998 results have not been reported before the comparative data from 1997 will not match those reported in last year's update because of this.

This update is based on information contained in the non-profit cultural organizations' required filings of Internal Revenue Service Form 990, the form required by the IRS to be filed by all organizations exempt from federal income taxation

The estimates below are drawn from National Center for Charitable Statistics files of cultural organizations created from IRS Form 990s. Specifically, these are files of New England's non-profit organizations that appeared in the IRS database for both 1997 and 1998. Those organizations categorized as cultural were extracted from this data base for analysis.¹

It is important to understand the nature and composition of the cultural organizations in the IRS database. These are organizations which, as noted, file an annual Form 990. Certain types of non-profit cultural organization are not found in this database. First, organizations with revenues under \$25,000 are not required to file this form. Second, "embedded organizations" are not reflected in this report. Embedded organizations are cultural activities or organizations structurally contained within a non-cultural, non-profit organization, such as a music school in a university, or a performing arts program in a community center. They are not captured by this analysis, because it is the parent organization which files the IRS form. Third, government agencies do not file this form, whether cultural or not. Finally, even organizations which file annually occasionally do not show up in the data base due to a delayed filing or related factors.

¹ The non-profit cultural industry, as reported in our 1996 study, is comprised of the following types of organization: ethnic, fair, historical society, humanities, library, media, multi-disciplinary, museum, performing, school, service, and visual arts. In culling information from the IRS data base, we have relied on the use of NTEE cultural codes and the state agency's own list of cultural organizations.

To attach some numbers to these comments, in our 1996 survey² we identified 1,044 non-profit cultural organizations in Rhode Island. Of these, 422 were recognized by the IRS; 152 as filing a form 990, and the remainder as reporting less information in the form required of under \$25,000 organizations. One must assume that of the roughly 600 identified organizations that did not appear in the IRS database, most are either embedded or government organizations, are exceedingly small, or have not commenced filing.

It should also be noted that every year new organizations are created and some go out of existence. In order to achieve consistency in the analysis, only those organizations filing in both 1997 and 1998 were compared, a total of 147 organizations.³

Relationship to the 1997 Report

In Rhode Island growth in income, spending and net asset position was observed. Detailed information from the NCCS file of IRS data are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below. Again, it must be kept in mind that this is not a random sample; the overall results between two years as shown below can be significantly influenced by large changes in a few large organizations. As noted, one large organization had to be dropped from the comparison.

We used the IRS data to project the aggregate size of the non-profit cultural “industry” in Rhode Island in 1998. This was done by incrementing aggregate spending and revenue of all organizations in the state, as reported in our 1996 survey, by the growth rates in average spending and average revenue reported in the IRS data. The results are in Table 1. This projection is based on the assumption that the average growth rate of all firms in the industry is the same as those in the sample. This translates into aggregate spending of \$176 million and aggregate income of \$199 million for non-profit cultural organizations statewide in 1998.⁴ Since the number of cultural organizations in Rhode Island is constantly growing, basing this 1998 projection on the total spending and incomes of organizations in existence in 1996 imparts a conservative bias to these estimates.

Detailed Findings from the IRS Data

²Gregory H. Wassall, and Douglas DeNatale, *Arts, Cultural, and Humanities Organizations in the New England Economy*, 1996 (Boston: New England Foundation for the Arts, 1997).

³In fact, there are 44 more organizations in the 1998 IRS file that were not in the 1997 file.

⁴These numbers are below those reported for 1997 in last year’s report, because of having to drop one large organization from the sample, and thus make projections from a smaller base.

The NCCS file permits a detailed examination of changes in sources of income between 1997 and 1998. Using data reported on Form 990s it is possible to reconstruct the same categories of revenue reported in our 1996 survey. Breakdowns of expenditures into meaningful categories, let alone the spending categories used in the 1996 study, are not possible. Also, no information is reported on salaries or number of employees. However, this file also has information, which we report annually, on the balance sheet position of cultural organizations from year to year.

In Table 2 a breakdown of sources of revenue is shown. Reporting organizations showed a growth in unearned revenue of 3.8 percent. However, earned revenue increased more substantially (10.1 percent), but investment revenue fell by 3.2 percent. Overall, total revenue rose by 7.2 percent. As noted, a breakdown of total expenditures is not possible. However, overall expenditure growth was 2.4 percent between 1997 and 1998 (Table 3).

Last, in Table 3 we also compare balance sheet positions of these organizations between the end of 1997 and the end of 1998. The past year saw the net asset positions of these organizations improve considerably. Between 1997 and 1998 assets grew at the rate of 5.1 percent, while liabilities shrank by 8.5 percent.

Finally we again note that the Rhode Island findings represent a good example of how unusual results for one large organization can skew the overall findings. In last year's report, we presented the results with this organization both included and excluded from the sample. This year, the results from inclusion were so dramatic (and misleading for the industry as a whole) that it was deemed more prudent to exclude the organization entirely from the computations.

TABLE 1						
FORECASTED CHANGE IN FINANCIAL STATUS OF RHODE ISLAND'S CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1997-98						
# OF ORGS. REPORTING TO IRS	1997-98 PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN IRS REPORTED:		1997 FORECAST:		1998 FORECASTED:	
	EXPENDITURE/ ORGANIZATION	REVENUE/ ORGANIZATION	TOTAL SPENDING (\$000)	TOTAL REVENUE (\$000)	TOTAL SPENDING (\$000)	TOTAL REVENUE (\$000)
147	2.45%	7.17%	\$171,664	\$185,534	\$175,875	\$198,829
<p>SOURCE: For the percentage change in expenditure and revenue per organization: IRS Information extracted and prepared from Form 990 filings by the National Center for Charitable Statistics. Percentage changes are also reported in Tables 2 and 3. For the reported 1996 aggregate cultural organization spending and income, which forms the basis of the 1997 and 1998 forecasts: Gregory H. Wassall, and Douglas DeNatale, <i>Arts, Cultural, and Humanities Organizations in the New England Economy</i>, 1996 (Boston: New England Foundation for the Arts, 1997), various tables.</p> <p>DEFINITIONS: Using the NCCS IRS Form 990 data extract, total expenditure is the sum of program, fund-raising, management and general expenses, as well as payments to affiliates, plus the following expenses which are deducted from revenues on the Form: expenses incurred while earning rental income, selling assets, staging for special events, and selling goods (i.e., cost of goods sold); total revenue is gross receipts from all sources of income with no expense deductions made. In our 1996 report, total spending is defined as the sum of operating expenses, outside fees, and capital expenses; total revenue is defined as the sum of earned income, unearned income, and endowment income. The definitions derived from the IRS data are chosen in order to make spending and revenue amounts comparable between the two sources of data.</p>						

TABLE 2
SOURCES OF REVENUE TO RHODE ISLAND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1997 AND 1998 AVERAGES

YEAR/ CHANGE	UNEARNED REVENUE	EARNED REVENUE	INVESTMENT REVENUE	TOTAL REVENUE
1997	\$231,801	\$399,844	\$37,752	\$669,397
1998	240,623	440,189	36,554	717,366
% CHANGE	3.81%	10.09%	-3.17%	7.17%
# ORGS. REPORTING	147	147	147	147

SOURCE: Information is from IRS Form 990 filings for 1997 and 1998 as tabulated by the National Center for Charitable Statistics.

DEFINITIONS: *Unearned revenue*: total public support (line 1d) from the IRS form 990. *Earned revenue*: total revenue (as defined herein) less unearned revenue and investment revenue (as defined herein). *Investment revenue*: the sum of interest on savings and temporary cash investments (line 4), dividends and interest from securities (line 5), and other investment income (line 7). *Total revenue*: total revenue (as reported on line 12) plus all deductions for costs of earning that total revenue (lines 6b, 8b, 9b, and 10b) added back.

TABLE 3
EXPENDITURES AND FINANCIAL STATUS OF
RHODE ISLAND'S CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1997-98 AVERAGES

# OF ORGS. REPORTING	TOTAL EXPENDITURES			ASSETS AT END OF YEAR			LIABILITIES AT END OF YEAR		
	1997	1998	% CHANGE	1997	1998	% CHANGE	1997	1998	% CHANGE
147	\$582,500	\$596,789	2.45%	\$1,536,726	\$1,614,934	5.09%	\$180,402	\$165,134	-8.46%

SOURCE: Information is from IRS Form 990 filings for 1997 and 1998 as tabulated by the National Center for Charitable Statistics

DEFINITIONS: Total expenditure: the sum of total expenses (line 17) and rental expenses (line 6b), sales expenses (line 8b), direct expenses from special events (line 8b), and cost of goods sold (line 10b).