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AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

MONOGRAPHS

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HATCHING ART **Creating a Vital Arts Presence in Your Community**

The program is the first arts innovation to be honored in the 10 year history of The Ford Foundation award, which recognizes "innovative ways of enhancing the operations and processes of American government."

MONOGRAPHS is one of the benefits of membership in Americans for the Arts. To discuss ideas for submission, contact Mara Walker, Programs and Member Services, Americans for the Arts, 927 15th Street NW, 12th Floor, Washington, DC 20005-2304; tel 202.371.2830.

AN AWARD-WINNING ARTS INCUBATOR MODEL

It is a common problem: How can a community continue the 20th century's legacy of support for the arts and establish a vital arts presence — with limited public funding?

Americans for the Arts members know that the arts are a valuable contributor to a community's identity, economic vitality and quality of life. When we talk about creating sustainable communities, the arts are part of the dialogue. It is widely recognized that the arts unite us in our similarities and celebrate our differences. While government and corporate arts funding has enabled the arts in America to flourish, the new millennium brings with it escalating costs and funding cutbacks that challenge their survival. And as public sector support for the arts is reduced, the private sector cannot replace these lost dollars.

Arlington County, Va., has successfully developed a new way of working in this changing climate: the arts incubator. This new model of support is infinitely adaptable and transferable to any community interested in expanding its arts presence despite limited resources.

In December 1996, Arlington County's Arts Incubator Program was among 10 recipients of the Innovations in American Government Award given each year by The Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The program is the first arts innovation to be honored in the 10-year history of the award, which recognizes "innovative ways of enhancing the operations and processes of American government."

The arts incubator model is a departure from the traditional business-based incubator (examined in the March 1995 Issue of *Monographs*) or other public funding paradigms. In brief, the model does five things: *mobilizes* untapped resources, *removes* impediments to growth, *courts* artists strategically, *connects* artists to the community and *creates* win-win partnerships.

The Arts Incubator Program provides an effective way to strengthen the arts without significantly increasing funding. Through an innovative restructuring of the traditional relationship between government and the arts, Arlington helps artists and arts organizations become self-sufficient, vital resources. The program takes existing underutilized facilities (school classrooms, auditoriums, retail and office spaces), pairs them with costume, set, lighting, exhibition and other administrative/technical services, and packages them as incentives for artists to invest in Arlington. The County has transformed itself into an arts enterprise zone by providing free or low cost rehearsal and studio spaces, galleries, theaters and professional staff as its main currency.

The Arts Incubator Program includes a strategic campaign that develops new organizations and persuades artists to relocate to Arlington. The approach is deliberate and opportunistic, guided by three desired outcomes: quality, accessibility and responsiveness to the diversity of interests in the community.

In an era when governments and artists often eye each other with suspicion, Arlington County is creatively using its status as a government body to secure resources for the arts. The County has demonstrated that the two can work together, and has transformed its own cultural landscape in the process.

ARLINGTON'S ARTS INCUBATOR STORY

Like many local municipalities, the community served by the Arts Incubator — the suburb of Arlington County in Northern Virginia — has undergone a transformation over the last 20 years. Where once the population was largely homogeneous, now one in four res-

idents is foreign-born, and there are more than 30 languages spoken in the area. Before the project's inception, the one-time Washington, D.C., bedroom community was a changing metropolis with an unchanging arts program, one that had remained fairly constant since the 1960s. County-subsidized arts services focused on 11 amateur performing arts groups as well as professional visual artists. County leadership began to question the value of the programs as infrastructure requirements and the diverse needs of new populations placed increased demands on public resources.

In 1986, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources was created from a reorganized Community Affairs Department in order to strengthen the leadership of those programs that affect a jurisdiction's quality of life. As part of this reorganization, the arts received greater emphasis; the Cultural Affairs Division was formed, and professional leadership was appointed at the departmental and divisional levels. Early in the assessment phase, staff recognized that existing services and programs supported the status quo; new policies were required for the new vision to be implemented. In 1987, the County Board appointed the Arts and Humanities Advisory Committee. Working closely with staff, a new policy was developed which increased access for any Arlington artist or arts organization, amateur or professional, to be supported by the County through a competitive grants process. At a time when a national discussion focused on censorship and government arts support, Arlington's policy committed, in writing, to complete freedom of artistic expression to all artists supported by the County.

In 1990, the County Board appointed the Arlington Commission for the Arts, a citizen's advisory group, to administer the adopted policy, and appropriated funds for improvements to existing facilities for visual and performing arts. In 1991, using the new policy and renovated facilities, staff developed the concept of an arts incubator that would attract artists who could respond more effectively to the interests of Arlington's diverse populations, as well as improve the overall quality of the arts. As a cost-effective strategy for providing the

THE ARLINGTON ARTS INCUBATOR PROGRAM SEEKS TO:

- ★ Develop and sustain a dynamic arts presence in an era of limited resources;
- ★ Insure high quality arts programming that is responsive to community needs and interests;
- ★ Increase access to the arts for Arlington's diverse communities;
- ★ Address critical social issues through increased interaction between artists and the community; and
- ★ Build the economic strength of Arlington by promoting its reputation as an arts community.

facilities and services that artists and arts organizations need to create and present their work, the program centers on a way of thinking rather than a way of spending, on re-imagining an assortment of untapped resources, such as underused public and private sector spaces. Though it administers only a small number of traditional grants — \$98,000 granted to artists and arts organizations in 1996 — the calculated annual savings in rent and production expenses for organizations using county-subsidized spaces and services exceeds \$400,000.

Staff modeled its efforts on economic development agencies as opposed to arts agencies, refocusing its resources to respond to artists' needs. Staff "courted" specific arts organizations in need of facilities and support, encouraging them to relocate to Arlington. Individuals interested in starting an arts organization were also encouraged and given assistance to launch their vision. Programs designed to meet the exhibition and marketing needs of artists were implemented. As new organizations and artists became active, staff worked with them to support their growth and respond to new needs. In addition, The United States Information Agency and the Institute for International Education selected the program to include in numerous international study tours. Staff presented the arts incubator model to arts administrators from Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Algeria, Columbia, Ghana, India, South Africa and Mexico.

PRINCIPALS FOR REPLICATION

An eminently adaptable model of arts support for both public and private nonprofit arts agencies, the Arts Incubator Program is transferable to any community interested in expanding its arts activity in spite of limited resources. To forge the strategic alliances necessary to implement an incubator program, arts advocates, board and staff must connect to schools, economic development, recreation, urban planning, zoning, private sector partners and any local resource available. The six principles that follow are a spring-

board from which any organization — of any size and budget — may begin to leverage those public and private resources needed to develop an arts-centered community.

GENERATE SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

For programs like Arlington's Arts Incubator to succeed, their administrators must convince the community as well as the local government jurisdiction that a healthy arts presence is a vital part of community infrastructure. Arlington's program seeks to change the way people think about the arts, and redefine the relationship between the community and its artists, procedurally and conceptually. The program's underlying assumption is simply that the arts make places better and that they should be as carefully cultivated as any other community good. "There is no cost to an arts friendly attitude," explains Arlington County Cultural Affairs Division Chief Norma Kaplan. "Any community can have it."

Adopting such an attitude necessitates taking a proactive rather than reactive approach to developing a local arts presence. The Arts Incubator Program pursues artists in much the same way that Chambers of Commerce pursue businesses, assisting individuals and groups who wish to launch new arts ventures in the area and expanding the scope of those organizations already in place. In turn, the arts incubator model acts as a magnet in attracting new and established artists and arts organizations.

Using space and services as incentives, staff strategically sought out regional artists and encouraged them to relocate to Arlington with an eye to improving overall quality and community relevance for the arts offered there. This method attracted a critical mass of arts groups seemingly overnight. The new companies supported each other, but were challenged to strive for excellence by the presence of other young, ambitious partners sharing the same performance space and technical resources.

The explosion of activity made it impossible for culture critics to continue to ignore arts events in

"There is no cost to an arts friendly attitude. Any community can have it!"

Norma Kaplan,
Division Chief,
Arlington County
Cultural Affairs
Division

Arlington. One Washington-based theater critic and National Public Radio commentator, who admitted to never having been across the river to Virginia for a show before, was impressed by what one tiny company was able to accomplish on stage. He became an early and vocal champion of the Arts Incubator Program, and helped forge the media alliance necessary to build a credible and lasting reputation. As a result of increased activity and visibility, strong partnerships evolved between the Cultural Affairs, Economic Development and Planning Divisions, as well as the private sector. The outcomes included increased financial support and new facilities for cultural activities.

The Cultural Affairs Division, in partnership with other County agencies, continually negotiates with developers and realtors to include the arts in their projects, particularly those in hard-to-rent areas with mostly commercial facilities. In the case of the County-run art gallery, the County granted the developer a zoning variance for the provision of an attractive gallery in the office building's commercial concourse; the Ellipse Arts Center is named for the office building which has housed it since 1990. This concept will soon be expanded to identify additional exhibition space throughout the county.

The Ellipse Crafts Shop, now located in one of the region's busiest shopping malls, is a classic example of how the Cultural Affairs Division used its connections as a government body to improve Arlington's artistic climate. Initially, the craft shop was in a small storefront adjacent to the Ellipse Arts Center. Though this worked for the art gallery, it was hardly enough to sustain a specialty retail craft business. So the County kept searching for other opportunities.

In 1995, the Arlington Symphony leveraged a deal for office space on the third floor of Ballston Common Shopping Mall. Faced with a fixed floor plan, the Symphony could not use the shallow retail area that faced the public mall, and called the Cultural Affairs Division to explore options for shared use. The new

location for the Ellipse Crafts Shop was born. In exchange for the space, the County pays the Symphony a nominal fee. The shop is staffed and run entirely by artists, with a committee of them deciding what works will be sold based on variety, quality and the artists' production capability.

Because of the success of such ventures, the Arlington business community is learning to be proactive in its approach to the arts, often initiating partnerships with artists directly. In January 1997, Ballston Common Shopping Mall announced that it will provide low-cost performance and office space to Arlington's Playtime Productions. This company of Russian-born and trained performing artists develops original scripts to provide quality entertainment for children.

Savvy elected officials are quick to jump on the Incubator bandwagon. Ellen Bozman, current Chair of the Arlington County Board, hails the arts as both "an economic developer" and "promoter of community." Both concepts, she says, have gained recognition in the last 20 years. "The arts reach out and touch individuals and groups of people who would not enter into community activities through any other route," she explains.

SEEK OUT UNTAPPED RESOURCES

Limited resources are not an excuse for lackluster arts support. Local government has many more assets than cash at its disposal, and making use of these assets requires a flexible and often opportunistic approach to problem-solving — what Arlington County Program Director Jon Palmer Claridge calls "government-plus-arts arithmetic." This can yield many unexpected resources when participants are open to possibility.

For example, the Arts Incubator secures rent-free facilities whose use requires ingenuity rather than capital: school classrooms and auditoriums, commercial warehouses, conference centers or vacant retail spaces. This can be done by creating partnerships with businesses, schools and nonprofit entities. Last year, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association made its conference room available to the

100-member Arlington Metropolitan Chorus for rehearsals; in turn, the chorus has given two concerts there. The conference room is made available to arts organizations 110 nights a year through a negotiated site plan amendment.

Another win-win partnership — four years in the making — is a converted single-screen movie house that will operate as a conference center by day and a professionally equipped theater at night, beginning Fall 1997. A local real estate executive, helped craft the split-use deal for Arlington's newest facility, called The Rosslyn Spectrum. "We're finding a complimentary use for a project we were anxious to do anyway," he explains. "We are business people. It was a matter of putting two and two together." Low-cost resources of this kind enable the Arts Incubator Program to provide facilities and services for artists for a nominal fee.

CONNECT ARTS SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY BENEFIT

When allocating arts support, local government often responds to the needs of the artist or arts organization rather than the needs of the community. In contrast, an arts incubator focuses first on the health and vitality of the community, and encourages artists to play an active role in its development.

An applicant's intended means of giving back to the community plays a role in whether it receives assistance; individuals and groups must include public activities as part of their proposed projects. For this reason, the inclusion of community service in project proposals is a significant criteria in evaluating whether an organization will receive Arts Incubator Program support.

The Arts Incubator Program's philosophy holds that participating groups will become healthier and, in turn, become community resources. To this end, it offers workshops on marketing, management and developing community arts projects, in addition to its other resources. Rather than dependence, the Arts Incubator Program aims to create a positive synergy.

MAXIMIZE RESOURCES THROUGH CREATIVE SHARING

Centralized facilities and services contribute significantly to the success of the Arts Incubator Program. A variety of professional and technical assistance is offered: theatrical design and construction; a 5,000 piece costume collection; master classes; and arts management consultants. And encouraging efficiency among the arts groups maximizes the County's resources, as well. Providing one scene shop that 20 arts organization can use is more cost-effective than providing funding to 20 separate groups who must then each rent the space and equipment to make their own sets. The same is true of gallery, rehearsal and office space.

A member of one of the County's community theater companies directs his actors in the Gunston Arts Center's 450-seat Theatre One—a County-run facility shared with Arlington Public Schools that is available to groups at no charge. Audiences pay a 10 percent surcharge to offset costs.



Photo by Michael Lutzky

The County has explored a wide range of approaches to acquiring and sharing space. There is the Gunston Arts Center, a 1950-middle-school-turned-performing-arts-complex, which the County renovated in the late 1980s; it is now home to two theaters, two dance studios, scenery/costume shops, multiple rehearsal rooms and administrative offices — a living metaphor for the Arts Incubator Program. And the

SUCCESS STORY: SIGNATURE THEATRE

One of the Arts Incubator's great success stories is Signature Theatre. In six relatively short years, it has become one of the most popular and critically acclaimed theater companies in the region. Starting from zero dollars in 1990, the company made full use of Arlington's free rehearsal and performance spaces and technical and costume resources. When the theater was ready to rent its own space in 1994, the County helped to negotiate an affordable rent-to-own lease on a vacant building and provided visible public support, as well as an incentive grant to aid them in their effort to raise funds for the build-out of the theater. Signature Theatre now has an operating budget of \$780,000, produces six sold-out shows per season,

has more than 3,000 subscribers and counts composer Stephen Sondheim and producer Cameron MacIntosh as honorary board members.

Though largely weaned from full "incubation" status, Signature Theatre still makes use of County resources. A recent production required sets and costumes far beyond the company's financial means; but by utilizing the county's costume production shop, Signature was able to mount a production that was lauded as "most astonishing, and inspired" by the *New York Times*. Freed from having to worry about day-to-day emergencies such as finding rehearsal space, Arlington artists are liberated to concentrate on artistic excellence.

Ellipse Arts Center is a gallery space acquired by the county in exchange for granting the developer a zoning variance; this kind of site-plan incentive grants developers desirable amenities in exchange for setting aside space for community use.

Though centralized resources can be difficult to manage when five groups want to use the facility at the same time, the benefits outweigh the problems. The artistic director of the Opera Theater of Northern Virginia says the County's resources are invaluable. "The set and costume shop do great things for us," he says. "delivering more than you would ever expect. If they sometimes aren't able to deliver as much as they'd like to, it's because there's only 24 hours in a day."

Teatro de la Luna, a Spanish-language theater company that holds its performances in the Arlington's Gunston Arts Center, is working with the County to develop new ways to attract the area's lower-income Latino audiences. Recent initiatives include offering on-site childcare and lowering ticket prices for some performances to \$1, a pilot initiative for the new Subsidized Surplus Ticket Program being developed by the Cultural Affairs Division's Community Arts Unit.

A key visual arts component in this new equation for arts support is the Lee Arts Center, a County-run open studio for pottery, tile and printmaking, which has become a regional creative center for artists. Housed in a former 1920s school, the arts center had been used for "traditional" arts activities for some time. In addition to two electric kilns, the County invested in a professional 27-square-foot gas-fired reduction kiln in 1993. Lee Arts Center was an instant hit with ceramicists from across the region, who pay \$25 per month for unlimited access to equipment that is cost-prohibitive for most individual artists.

If Arlington County stopped at helping to making artists and organizations more productive, it would be a job half-done. The program also actively seeks opportunities for artists to sell their work and bring it further into the community. As intended, this approach has helped the County to develop a group of active

visual artists, using existing resources with a minimal investment of tax dollars. With heightened productivity, most of the artists are able to concentrate more on marketing their work. In turn, many of them have used the proceeds to purchase their own equipment and now work at home, making room for new artists.

ADOPT A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO ARTS SUPPORT

Those who hope to implement the arts incubator model will find it necessary to “de-bureaucratize” the way that government and other agencies respond to artists and arts organizations. Each artist and group is unique and needs different kinds of assistance and support. Rather than applying one formula to all applicants, the Arts Incubator Program responds to each artist and group individually, providing each a customized menu of facilities, services and funding. Although the model is dynamic, resources are finite, and the number of artists and the type of support does fluctuate, based on needs. Artists compete for Arts Incubator Program resources within a policy adopted by elected officials and administered by a diverse citizen commission.

Administering this arts incubator model — which responds to participant needs on a case-by-case basis — requires a fluidity not often associated with government bodies. This kind of institutional flexibility turns conventional bureaucratic thinking inside out. For such a program to be effective, local governments must be willing to act spontaneously and take risks.

A low-risk exchange dubbed the “75/25 split” allows an interested group with little more than an intriguing idea to mount productions without waiting to become a supported organization. The County takes 25 percent of the box office in exchange for use of its performance facilities, scene shop and costume collection. This arrangement not only creates an unofficial screening process outside of the grant’s cycle, but makes a wider range of arts activities available to the public.

One local dancer and choreographer has gone from



Photo by Current Rutledge

producing “75/25” events to launching her own company with assistance from the Arts Incubator Program. “They call me their little egg,” she laughs, “and I’m happy to be an egg. I don’t think I would have done this without knowing that by living in Arlington County I had this kind of support available to me. I never thought I’d have my own company.”

The County’s relationship with a nearby organization in Maryland, The Writer’s Center, is an example of the benefits of organizational flexibility. The Writer’s Center is one of the region’s primary non-university-affiliated resources for writers, offering workshops and classes in the learning and marketing of writing.

Lee Arts Center, housed in a school-turned-community center, is home to cooperative artists studios in ceramics, tilemaking and printmaking. Many of the center’s artists exhibit and sell their work at the County-run craft shop in a local mall, among other venues.

The Cultural Affairs Division employs costumers to work with the County's arts organizations to design, construct and alter hundreds of pieces of apparel each year. Groups can apply for free costume assistance as part of the County's annual grants process.

An underused meeting room in Arlington's Gunston Arts Center now serves as a "satellite campus" for workshops sponsored by The Writer's Center, making it more accessible with locations on both sides of Washington, D.C. And the County's Cultural Affairs Division is making an entirely new literary audience aware of Gunston Arts Center and its programs. This flexibility allows the County to expand into the "incubation" of other media, with film and video programs currently in development.



Photo by Current Rutledge

ENABLE ARTISTIC RISK-TAKING

Arlington's arts incubator model promotes innovation by creating a wider margin for error, essentially removing an organization's dependence on the box office for

its survival. Giving artists and arts groups the freedom and security to work with less concern for financial failure and more for artistic possibility can create an exciting cultural climate and broaden a community's vision. Unfortunately, in a time when resources for the arts are limited, many public arts programs have opted to present popular, or safe, entertainment and exhibitions in order to increase attendance and income. However, if the creation and presentation of art is always linked to box-office success, then opportunities to present works that probe the tough issues confronting contemporary society are restricted. The arts incubator allows artists to expose the community to differing views, thereby encouraging its growth. The arts incubator has the dexterity to support artists for their good ideas.

WHAT OBSTACLES SHOULD NEW INCUBATORS ANTICIPATE?

Arlington's most significant obstacle was resistance early on from the established arts groups in the community. These groups, primarily local amateur companies, had become very dependent on the County for extensive support. With the adoption of the new arts support policy, the groups' status changed dramatically. The resources with which the arts groups had grown accustomed were decreased because of others now sharing support. Organizations were expected to find new resources, be more independent and be accountable for their artistic growth. This created much uncertainty and anger, and resulted in complaints from the amateur groups about competition from professional companies and pressure on local officials to maintain the status quo. Staff, working closely with the Arts and Humanities Advisory Committee, met frequently with representatives from the arts community to mitigate their fears and build support for the new policy and program direction. Citizen advocates were also vocal in many different public forums, supporting both the new policy and the need for additional resources.

Related to this was a second critical obstacle: the County's existing bureaucracy, which was not prepared to deal with the new approach to arts development. The bureaucracy had to be convinced that this new strategy would strengthen the arts presence in Arlington and that all would benefit. This was achieved through dedicated staff with strong leadership skills, a proven record of success and effective management of controversies. By working with all the concerned departments in the County's structure, including Management and Finance, the County Attorney's Office, Economic Development, the Public Information Office and the County Managers Office, the division was able to get elected officials to affirm the Arts Incubator Program strategy.

An ongoing obstacle is the availability of appropriate space for the increasing number and diversity of arts groups. Current spaces are most suitable to the work of small theater or opera companies; because each discipline has very specific needs, multi-purpose arts spaces often do not serve groups well. Current needs include an acoustically suitable facility for chamber ensembles and appropriate facilities to attract and incubate emerging professional dance companies or choreographers. Staff continues to work to acquire access to new spaces that would support a greater balance in the range of arts programs available. And, as arts agencies know too well, despite the Arts Incubator Program's success, it is not immune to taxpayers who question public funding for the arts in the first place.

At this time, however, the program enjoys widespread support from artists, arts organizations, citizens, media and County government agencies. The older arts organizations, early critics of the initiative, have greatly benefited from increased attention to the Arlington arts scene. More of the area's visual artists are selling and showing their work on a continuing basis and, unlike other cities of its size, Arlington can boast a resident opera company, several dance troupes and theaters, as well as a symphony orchestra.

HOW DO I KNOW IF AN ARTS INCUBATOR WILL WORK IN MY COMMUNITY?

The goal of the incubator model is to "grow the arts" and improve the diversity and quality of the arts offerings without a significant increase in public funding. In Arlington, success is measured by tracking the overall growth of the arts, the media recognition and awards received, as well as the movement of arts organizations toward greater self-sufficiency.

GROWTH: In 1990, before the start of the Arts Incubator Program, Arlington hosted 198 arts events by 11 arts organizations for a total audience of 98,000. Eight visual arts exhibitions were mounted annually and staff assisted approximately 30 individual artists using County resources. In 1996, Arlington hosted over 1,300 arts events by 25 arts organizations, with a total audience exceeding 300,000. Twenty-two exhibitions were mounted and staff assisted 96 individual artists with services, funding and special projects.

RECOGNITION: Before 1990, the County had not received any awards for professional theater activity, and media coverage was sporadic. Since 1990, County groups have received over 60 Helen Hayes Award nominations (Washington's equivalent of Broadway's Tony), winning 16 Awards. Since 1990, many visual arts exhibitions have been highly acclaimed and 13 theatrical productions have been cited as the year's best by *The Washington Post* and *Washington City Paper*, the area's two major outlets for arts coverage.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY: Before 1990, 10 of the 11 arts groups supported by the County operated exclusively in County facilities and received extensive technical, administrative and funding support. Currently, six groups operate in independent facilities, and all groups have developed a greater level of independence and managerial expertise as a result of sharing the same resources with more organizations. From 1990 to 1996, the County's arts industry has grown from \$1,000,000 to over \$5,000,000.

CONCLUSION

The Arlington Arts Incubator Program demonstrates a replicable strategy that can be adapted to sustain a vital arts presence in any community. This strategy transformed a lackluster arts program focused on serving the interests of a few participants into a nationally-recognized, dynamic program that addresses the changing needs and interests of Arlington's diverse community. This transformation was achieved in a period of six years, without a significant influx of new resources.

While the program was successful in attracting vibrant and diverse new arts groups, staff was not prepared for the level of organizational support that would be needed to sustain some of these organizations and programs. Because of this, for example, papermaking facilities at Lee Center for the Arts were lost and some groups including an African-American theater, a chamber opera company and a group devoted to producing new plays disbanded due to a lack of managerial expertise. As a result, Arlington's Cultural Affairs Division has been restructured and resources have been reallocated within the department to provide proactive organizational development to groups supported through the Arts Incubator Program. Among the new services being created are assistance with fundraising, audience and board development and establishing community arts outreach programs.

Arlington did not start with any additional resources for the Arts Incubator Program. However, as a result of its success, arts funding and resources have increased over the last few years, even though the growth in the overall County budget has not kept pace with inflation. Continuing to create win-win partnerships with private developers and corporations will be essential to the Arts Incubator Program's future success.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This *Monographs* was prepared by the Arlington County Cultural Affairs Division staff in conjunction with freelance writer Nicole Arthur. For more information on the program, call the Cultural Affairs Division at 703.358.6960 or write to Arlington Cultural Affairs Division 2700 S. Lang Street, Arlington, VA 22206.

Can an arts incubator program create a vital arts presence in other communities? The answer is a resounding YES. Most jurisdictions can secure rent-free facilities from underutilized school classrooms and auditoriums, commercial warehouses, conference centers or vacant retail spaces. These resources can be transformed into dynamic arts spaces through use agreements that call for more creativity than capital. And developing responsive governmental policies will provide a solid foundation for implementation. The challenge will be for us all to become better arts entrepreneurs. To continue this support, staff will need to develop new ways to integrate the arts into the lives of all residents so that the importance and relevance of the arts to our communities is unquestioned.

By its nature, the arts incubator strategy is an effective way to return the arts to the center of community life. It is a model of arts support for anyone willing to take an approach to arts funding that relies as much on creativity and inspiration as art itself.

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