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## Not-for-Profit Theatre in America The Field at a Glance

In 1961, the not-for-profit professional theatre in America consisted of only 16 theatre companies established specifically for educational and charitable purposes. Today, thanks in large measure to the pivotal role played by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since its creation in 1965, the field consists of diverse theatres—located in major metropolitan centers, urban neighborhoods, suburbs and rural communities—estimated to more than 1,900. Their wide-ranging repertoire includes classics; modern plays and musicals; new plays, adaptations and translations by American and international writers; plays for culturally specific and young audiences; and experimental, multimedia and performance-art works.

Collectively, these 1,919 theatres (those filing IRS Form 990) play to an annual audience of more than 32 million Americans. An additional 2.7 million people are served by the 1,200 outreach and educational programs offered by the 176 profiled theatres responding to TCG's survey, including touring productions, artists-in-the-schools, teacher training, workshops and lectures in local community centers and libraries, internships for college students, special programs for at-risk children and life-long learning opportunities.

By supporting the nation's finest theatre institutions, the NEA has contributed far beyond the actual monetary value of its grants. The leveraging effect of NEA grants attracts other private and public funding, through matching requirements as well as the symbolic imprimatur an NEA grant represents. Nearly every Pulitzer Prize-winning play since 1976 originated at an NEA-funded theatre, and a network of educational and outreach programs has sprung up across the country as a result of NEA support, ensuring access to all Americans and developing new generations of audiences.

### 2008 Universe of U.S. Not-For-Profit Professional Theatres

*1,919 Theatres*

#### Productivity

Attendance	32,000,000
Subscribers	1,500,000
Performances	202,000
Productions	15,000

#### Finances

Earnings	\$954,800,000
Contributions	\$929,400,000
Total Income	\$1,884,200,000
Expenses	\$1,859,600,000
Net Surplus	\$24,600,000

#### Work Force

Artistic	83,000
Administrative	14,000
Technical	34,000
Total Paid Personnel	131,000

*Theatre Facts 2008*, a study by Theatre Communications Group based on its annual fiscal survey, reported on 1,919 not-for-profit professional theatres including 176 TCG member theatres ranging in size from \$131,000 in annual operating expenses to more than \$54 million. These U.S. not-for-profit theatres employed more than 131,000 theatre workers—actors, directors, playwrights, designers, administrators and technicians—and constituted a \$1.9 billion industry, with an even greater economic impact generated by these institutions in their local communities. And from the 176 member theatres 52% of total expenses were devoted to compensation of personnel. The 1,919 theatres are estimated to have offered 202,000 performances that attracted 32 million patrons.

NEA funding impacted theatres in many ways. Direct impact came not only in the form of project grants, but also in the multiplier effect that NEA grants, through their 2-to-1 or 3-to-1 matching funds requirement, have on theatres' abilities to leverage funding. Indirectly, NEA funding was felt by theatres as it trickled down in the form of bloc grants to states and, subsequently, as city and county funding. State and local arts agencies together provided theatres with 4.0 percent of their total income.

### Examples of Economic and Community Impact

With the support of a \$40,000 Access to Artistic Excellence grant from the NEA, Signature Theatre located in Arlington, Virginia will produce *Sycamore Trees*, the second commission of Signature's American Musical Voices Project. Backed by an eight-member cast and an eight-piece orchestra, *Sycamore Trees* is an autobiographical musical about a working-class Jewish family and their struggle to rely on each other through good times and bad. Renowned composer, Ricky Ian Gordon has described his inspiration for the piece: "When my father came home from World War II in 1945, my family lived in a crowded tenement in the Bronx, poor and with bed bugs. Then my parents got the idea to move to the suburbs where the dream of life flowering in a clean and spacious environment promised to be the answer. This is the story of a family and what happened to them." *Sycamore Trees* is directed by Steppenwolf Theatre member and nationally acclaimed director Tina Landau and stars Marc Kudisch, Judy Kuhn, and Diane Sutherland. It should also be noted that Signature Theatre was honored with the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award.

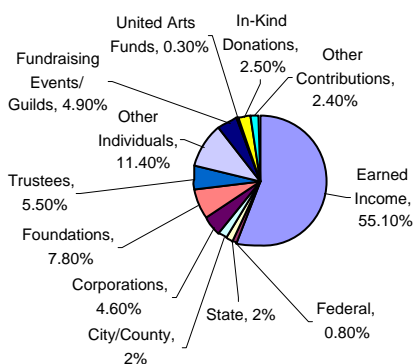
Sierra Repertory Theatre in Sonoma, CA received a \$10,000 Challenge America grant, which will support professional guest artist salaries for an 8-week production of the musical *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from July 16-August 29 at the historic Fallon House theatre in Columbia State Historic Park. The project also includes a significant

educational component: reduced-cost student matinees, discounts for families, a partnership with the public library's summer reading program, and assistance as teachers incorporate the play into their curriculums. This summer production is a perfect fit for the historic venue, and promises to make a significant economic impact in this rural, remote community.

Idaho Shakespeare Festival received funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act specifically to support the work of one director, four designers, nine actors and two stage managers. That \$50,000 grant was the first source of new funds extended to the Festival following the onset of the recession in 2008. It enabled a production of *Othello*, which spoke to the core mission of the company, while also creating another 15-20 jobs for supporting actors and technicians. In addition, it guaranteed ancillary educational opportunities provided by these artists (to the festival's summer camps, high school apprentice company, professional interns and community outreach programs). The Board has more than matched the stimulus funds through a special effort called "The Company We Keep," and is using its success to study a broader community approach to further insuring the long-term solvency, stability and growth of Idaho's flagship theatrical and arts-educational enterprise.

The NEA is supporting the Utah Shakespearean Festival's production of *Great Expectations*, a world-premier adaptation based on the novel by Charles Dickens with a \$25,000 Access to Artistic Excellence grant. This festival is located on the Southern Utah University campus in Cedar City, a community of approximately 28,000 people. NEA support will enable the company to present a new, exciting musical, adapted by Margaret Hoorneman, of a rich classic novel. A story of class, crime, and moral obligation, Dickens' *Great Expectations* focuses on many of the most pressing questions and challenges still faced in today's world. The company will present the exciting, accessible, and relevant story to their audience of 110,000, roughly 40% of which travels from out of state to attend the festival.

**Income as Percent of Expenses  
(176 Profiled Theatres)**



**Breakdown of Income  
(176 Profiled Theatres)**

