
**NATIVE CULTURAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS:
WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY NEED**

An Analytic Summary of Atlatl's National Survey of
Native American Controlled Cultural Arts Organizations

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for

Atlatl, Inc.
National Service Organization for Native American Arts

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Introduction

The term “Native-controlled cultural arts organizations” refers to a broad range of arts-related entities, including (among others) tribal museums, tribal cultural centers, cultural programs in urban Indian centers, galleries that curate shows from the Native perspective, and multiple service organizations that might offer a retail outlet, space for artists to work and perform, and educational programs for both artists and the larger community. Despite their variety, these organizations share a common cause – they support Native American artists, their art, and the cultural connections that underlie the artists’ creativity and commitments.

Recognizing the importance of this organizational sector to cultural revival and change in Native America, as well as the relative marginalization of Native art and artists in the non-Indian world, Atlatl, Inc., National Service Organization for Native American Arts, works on behalf of the sector to promote the vitality of contemporary Native American art through self-determination in cultural expression. As part of this work, Atlatl has twice conducted a national survey of Native-controlled cultural arts organizations, in 1998 and again in late 2003, in order to gain a better understanding of the entities that comprise the sector and their needs. Atlatl’s goal is to use this information to improve its service offerings and, more broadly, to inform all of those interested in the promotion of Native arts (from the artists themselves to the philanthropic community) of the ways they might work together most effectively.

To that end, this document offers an analytic summary of the 2003 survey. It begins with a brief discussion of survey methodology, the response rate, and inference capacities. It continues by presenting basic survey findings on the structure, programs, facilities, staffing, and funding of the respondent organizations. The next section concentrates on several distinct characteristics and needs of sub-groups within the sector. The report concludes by summarizing primary issues and opportunities for Atlatl and others engaged with Native cultural arts.

Methods, Response Rate, and Inference Capacity

In the fall of 2003, Atlatl, Inc., and Behavior Research Center of Phoenix, Arizona, designed and implemented a mail survey directed at Native American-controlled cultural arts organizations in the United States. The eight-page survey was based on the 1998 survey, but adjusted to account for feedback on that effort and to include new questions from concerned sector watchers about the organizations’ purposes, needs, and challenges. An initial mailing announcing the survey and its purposes was sent to 233 organizations identified by Atlatl as potential Native American arts organizations (a list which itself was culled from an original list of 335 organizations surveyed in 1998). Of these, 180

were determined to be qualified for the study, and 43 returned completed surveys, for a response rate of 24%. This rate is comparable to the 22% response rate achieved in 1998.

On the one hand, this is a comparatively high response to a mail survey, especially one conducted in Native America. On the other hand, drawing conclusions from only 43 responses, especially conclusions based on sub-categorical analysis, may be misleading. With this in mind, we have proceeded cautiously, guarding against over-interpretation of the data, particularly when making statements about the characteristics of subgroups of the organizational population.

These considerations suggest that future iterations of this survey would benefit from efforts to increase the response rate and efforts to expand the pool of eligible respondent organizations. When queried on the reason for the decreasing number of surveyed organizations between 1998 and 2003, Atlatl representatives noted that many arts organizations had closed in that time period. This explanation accords with one survey finding (see below), that limited funding results in fragile organizations and, presumably, high failure rates. However, survey analysis also suggests that the sector has experienced a solid rate of growth and, as a result, is relatively “youthful” today; these facts suggest that there should have been a number of new organizations entering the field between 1998 and 2003. Instead, only one survey respondent reported a founding date in that period. In sum, it may no longer be sufficient to rely on extant mailing lists for survey outreach. Other means may need to be employed to find the names and addresses of newer arts organizations, especially if they are more marginal and less networked than older organizations in the survey pool. Possibilities for such outreach include more options for responding (for example, allowing respondents to submit information via mail, telephone, or the internet), making the survey available at regional and national meetings at which representatives of target organizations might be present, and increased use of “nominations,” in which respondents are asked to name other organizations that ought to be responding to the survey.

Typical Characteristics of Respondent Cultural Arts Organizations*

Structure

Native controlled cultural arts organizations responding to the survey are similar in many ways, particularly with regard to their structure. Most are 501c(3) nonprofit organizations (59%), a statistic up from 50% in 1998. While this change may be an artifact of the two surveys’ different respondent samples, it may also arise from a decreasing proportion of tribal corporations in the sector (29% of respondents in 1998, as compared to 23% in 2003[†]). In combination, these figures on 501c(3) and tribal incorporation turn up an important fact about Native cultural arts organizations: very few lack the formal structure

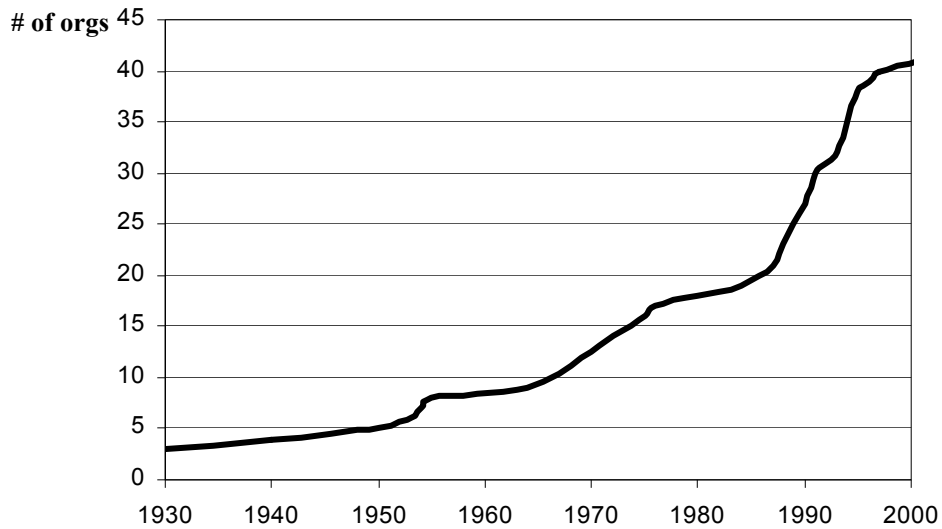
* Here, “typical characteristics” are those reported by a super-majority of respondents – for example, 60% or more of the respondents.

† Of course, this percentage may also be an artifact of the samples, but the point remains that the proportions bear watching in the analysis of future surveys.

provided by incorporation. Only five respondents (11%) characterized themselves as “non-incorporated.” This formal structure is also evident in the fact that nearly all respondent organizations have a board of directors (86%). Most of these boards (74%) are composed of a majority of Native people or are entirely Native.

A critical additional structure-related fact about these organizations is that they are quite young. Among respondents, 50% were founded between 1929 and 1987, with the other 50% founded between 1987 and 2001. This “youthfulness” of the organizational population is especially evident in Figure 1, which graphs the cumulative distribution of founding dates. The line’s sharper increase since 1970 shows great vitality and growth in the field* and the dominance of more recently founded organizations.

Figure 1. Year Founded, cumulative distribution



Programs and Facilities

A large majority of respondents stated that their missions included these three elements: cultural preservation and advocacy for cultural preservation (91%), education (84%), and museum and gallery functions (73%). While respondents were encouraged to check as many elements as were relevant to their missions and to add elements as necessary, fewer than 50% of the organizations indicated engagement with any of the other options listed

* The field has grown by 4.26% per year since 1970, and this is likely an underestimate, since there is limited information in the calculation about organizations formed since 1998 and no information about organizations that entered the field (even for several or more years) and then exited.

on the survey form.* This finding is strongly related to the organizational type reported by respondents, as 35 of the 43 identified themselves as a cultural center, cultural preservation office, gallery, or museum.

The commonalities in organizational mission also help explain the programs respondent organizations offer, the facilities available, and the typical needs associated with these facilities. In terms of programs, 75% of the organizations have a collection of historical arts, crafts, or cultural items; 73% have a collection of the works of contemporary artists and craftspeople; 68% provide lectures to the public; 68% offer other educational programs; 61% present special exhibitions; 57% offer various kinds of performances; and 55% have a shop or store. Similarly, when queried on the artistic medium that is the focus of programming (multiple answers were allowed), 89% of respondents reported “graphic arts” (which include painting, photography, drawing, visual arts, etc.) and 86% reported “crafts” (which include beadwork, basketry, jewelry, textiles, pottery, quilt making, etc.). In terms of facilities, 68% have exhibit space and administrative offices, but there is a dearth of artists studios (11%, or 5 respondents, report having them), stages or theatres (11%), and darkrooms (2%, a single respondent).

Good news on the facilities front is that 52% own their own buildings, and another 18% operate out of donated tribal space, which especially for tribal museums, tribal cultural centers, and tribal cultural preservation offices, may be roughly equivalent to the organization owning the space. In other words, some 70% of respondents may be said to have fairly secure rights to space.

The bad news is that the overwhelming majority of Native cultural arts organizations that house some sort of collection – which themselves constitute a large majority of the sample – report unmet preservation needs. The most typical problem is “inadequate storage space” (listed by 79% of the more than 75% of the sample with collections, which translates to a full 60% of the respondents overall). It should be noted, however, that this is a vague problem description. It could mean anything from a need for more square footage to the need for highly protected facilities in which to house fragile and culturally sensitive artifacts and, thus, ought to be fully understood before supportive remedial action is taken. Nonetheless, the pervasiveness of the need is remarkable.

Reflecting on these typical programmatic and facility characteristics, what is most striking is how many of the respondents were cultural centers, cultural preservation offices, museums, and galleries. These are organizations that “present” cultural arts and artists, rather than support artists directly. There is a dearth of organizations in the sample – and perhaps in the sector (if the sample is representative) – that support artists more directly (by providing them with work space, putting them in direct contact with their markets, training them in business skills or leadership, and so on). Such organizations also are necessary to promote the vitality of Native American art. Their limited represen-

* The other possible elements and the percentage of respondents listing them are: youth-based programs (46%), emerging artist programs (41%), arts advocacy (41%), performing arts (27%), programs for seniors (25%), advocacy for arts funding (23%), leadership development (14%), language preservation (volunteered by respondents) (5%), and work creation programs (volunteered by respondents) (2%).

tation in the survey implies either that these organizations are few on the ground (and that their formation and sustainability should be supported) *or* that they were simply under-represented in the survey or respondent pool (and that a concerted effort should be undertaken to include them, in order to gain important profile and need information).

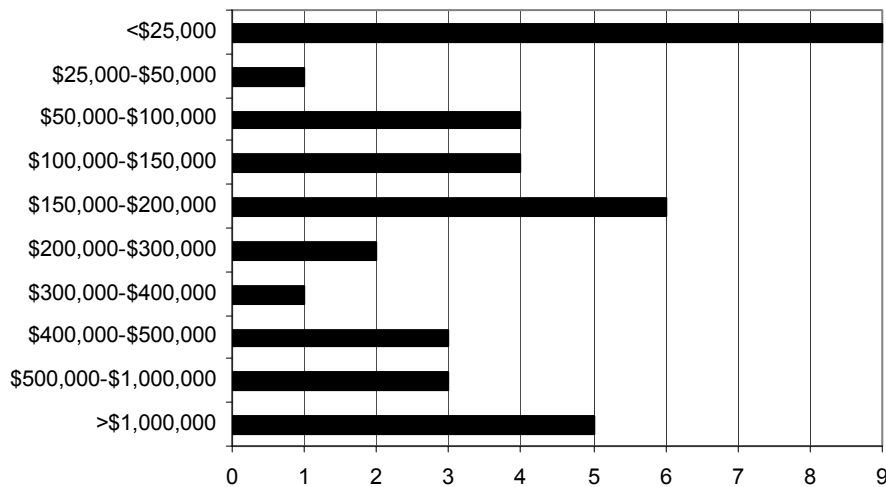
Staffing and Funding

Most organizations are small, as is evident in both their staffing and budgets. Sixty-five percent (28 respondents) have fewer than five full-time staff. It is not even the case that organizations make up this limited full-time capacity with part-timers. When part-time employees are included in the count at their full-time equivalent (FTE) value, the statistic remains essentially unchanged: 63% (27 respondents) of the organizations have five or fewer full-time equivalent employees. Even at the 75th percentile, respondents have 10 or fewer FTE employees. A bright spot in this picture, however, is that 59% of respondents report a majority or entirely Native staff.

Notably, respondents also depend heavily on volunteers. This is perhaps a predictable characteristic of the several large, regionally focused museums in the respondent sample, which actively recruit volunteers to serve as docents or aid in exhibit interpretation; their contributions thus supplement the work of paid staff. But a full 77% of the respondent sample reports relying on volunteers. A comparison of these numbers to the paid staff numbers suggests that many Native cultural arts organizations rely on volunteers not only to supplement the efforts of paid staff, but also to “stand in” for unaffordable employees.

This interpretation gains more credence through an examination of budget figures. As shown in Figure 2, most respondent organizations operate on shoestring budgets. Sixty-three percent report annual budgets of less than \$200,000; indeed, the median budget reported was less than \$150,000.

Figure 2. Organizational Budgets, by range



Typical sources of funds supporting Native-controlled cultural arts organizations budgets include income from the sale of art and products (68% of respondents reported budget support from this source), contributions from individuals (68%), income from event admissions (57%), and contributions from businesses (57%). However, these funding sources tend to be “minor” contributors to the organizations’ overall budgets rather than “major.” Indeed, among the possible sources of funds,* no single category of either earned or grant/gift income is listed by a majority of respondents as a “major source of funds.”

Summary Analysis of Common Characteristics

These similarities underline certain strengths and weaknesses of the field. On the upside, the fact that so many have boards suggests that most Native-controlled cultural arts organizations benefit from a board’s ability to provide institutional cohesion, institutional memory, and a ready panel for advice and problem-solving.

On the downside, however, the surveyed organizations’ human and financial capital may limit their capacity to meet goals or even to survive. Sixty-four percent of the respondents’ full-time staff lack college degrees, 58% of the respondents have no budget for fundraising and see this as an obstacle, only 27% have a development office, 71% report facing the issue of declining funding, and 57% report a serious need for technical assistance with fundraising.

Given that many of these organizations see themselves as multi-functional – having, for example, a variety of exhibit, performance, education, advocacy, artist support, and cultural preservation goals† – low funding, staffing, and staff education levels may make it very difficult for them to fulfill their broad missions. Wanting to do much with very little is laudable, but nonetheless makes for fragile organizations.

Differences between Respondents: Sub-Groups in the Native-Controlled Cultural Arts Sector

While there are a number of commonalities among respondents to the Atlatl survey, and it is useful to know what they are, there also are several important differences between respondents. Understanding these differences, especially when they can be associated with particular subgroups within the universe of Native cultural arts organizations, is critical – it refines the picture being sketched of the organizations’ needs and helps Atlatl (and other supporters) tailor their outreach and support.

* In addition to those listed above, the survey queried whether an organization received support from membership fees/dues, the sale of services/consulting, the federal government, foundations, state governments, tribal governments, endowment income, and tribal gaming revenue allocations.

† In answering to the question, “What is your type of organization? Please check all that apply,” on average, respondents checked three of the following choices: museum, cultural center, educational institution, gallery, cultural preservation office, arts service, performing arts, performance group, publisher, arts agency, media.

Questions of interest in this subgroup analysis were: Do factors such as location and annual revenues correlate with the type or function of the responding organizations? Are Native-controlled cultural arts organizations located in urban and suburban areas more likely to have certain advantages or needs due, for example, to their access to larger markets? Do different types of organizations' sources of revenue differ? Do different types of organizations have different needs?

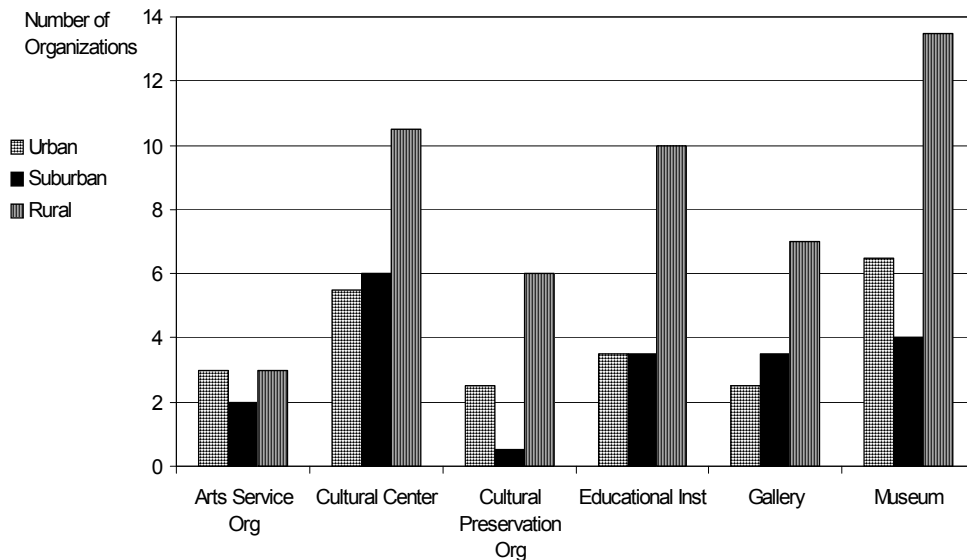
A Caveat on Sample Size

This particular analysis underscores sample size concerns. Only 43 surveys were deemed valid, and the group was sub-divided into even smaller categorical samples. For this reason, conclusions and generalizations must be viewed with caution. Making firm statements about an entire sub-sector of the universe of Native-controlled cultural arts organizations based on an analysis of, for instance, 12 organizations is unwise. Ultimately, either many more returned surveys or very good information about how well the few sample organizations represent their sub-sector (or both) are needed. For these reasons, the smallest subsets (typically, those with fewer than eight observations) have been excluded from the analysis, and information in this section is presented as *indicative* only.

Findings on Location, Organization Type, and Funding Sources

Among the Native-controlled cultural arts organizations that returned surveys, 48% are located in rural regions, 25% in suburban areas, and 27% in urban areas. Figure 3 provides organization-by-location data on the six organizational types sufficiently represented in the dataset.

Figure 3. Location of Native Cultural Arts Organizations (urban, suburban, and rural)



These data suggest that, regardless of type, Native-controlled cultural arts organizations are more likely to be located in rural regions than in other geographies; only arts services organizations are relatively evenly dispersed across regions. These observations are true, but a more informative comparison may be between urban/suburban and rural locations. After all, both urban and suburban regions are characterized by denser populations and better access to markets, and they are also less likely to be “tribal” regions.*

Figure 4 provides this second locational breakdown of survey respondents. It affirms that cultural preservation organizations, educational institutions, and museums are more likely to be located in rural regions; that cultural centers and galleries are fairly evenly distributed across the geographies; and that arts services organizations are more likely to be located in urban or suburban areas.

Figure 4. Location of Native Cultural Arts Organizations (urban/suburban and rural)

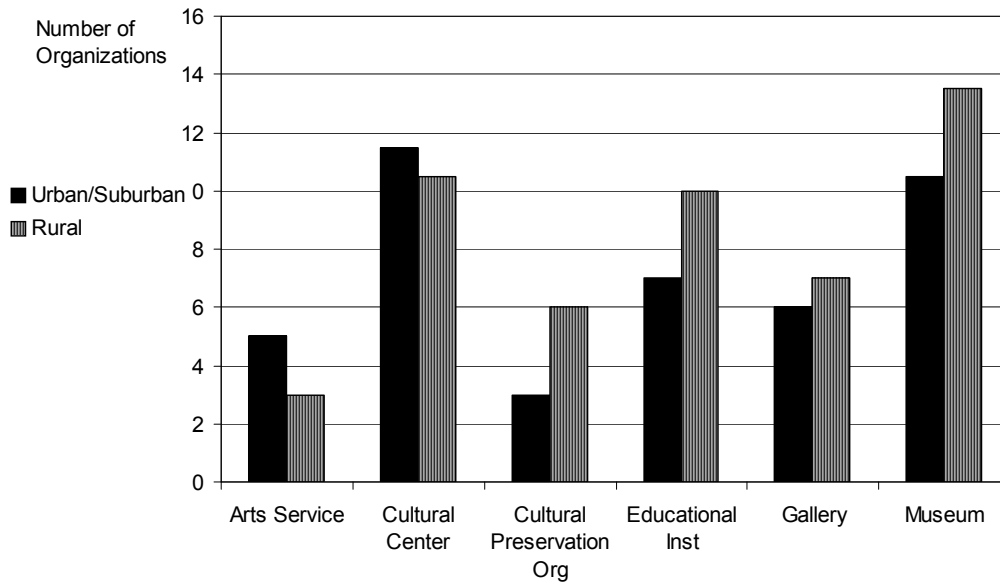
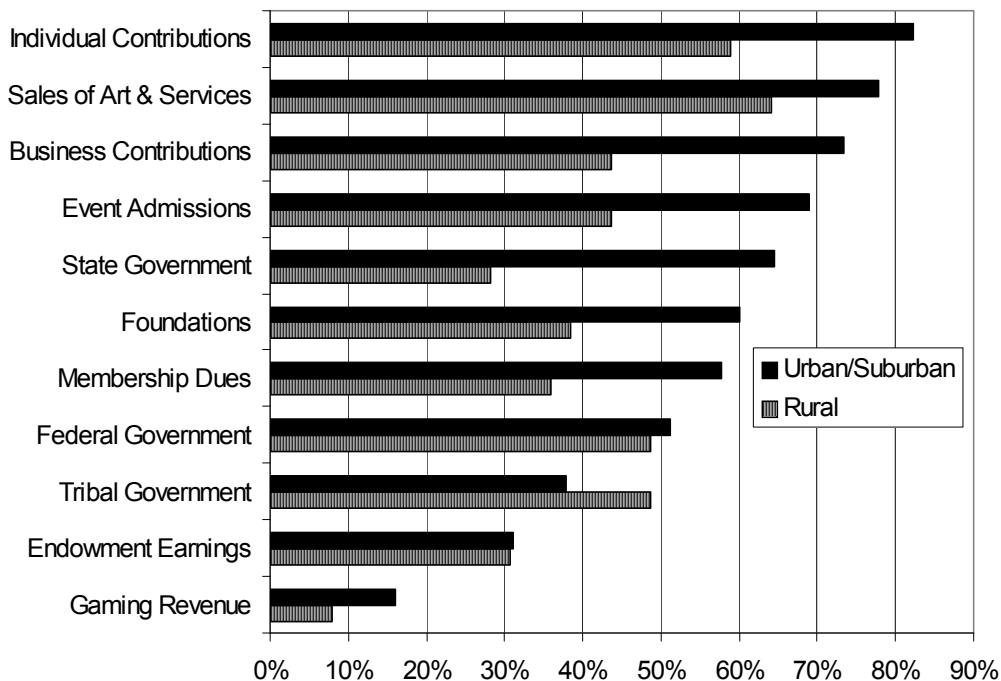


Figure 5 adds another dimension to these findings by exploring the relationship between location and Native cultural arts organizations’ sources of revenue. Strikingly, there is only one revenue source that rural organizations are more likely than urban/suburban organizations to identify as “major” – funding from tribal governments. One reason may be that rural Native-controlled cultural arts organizations are more connected to tribes than urban/suburban organizations (again, see the footnote on this page), and thus, the

* Since 1990, more than 50% of self-identified American Indians have lived in urban areas (see college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_041400_urbanindians.htm, accessed February 2005). Yet only some 20% of reservation-resident American Indian live in urban areas (see www.ksg.harvard.edu/hpaied/pubs/documents/AmericanIndiansonReservationsADatabookofSocioeconomicChange.pdf, p. 5, accessed February 2005). Thus, most urban Natives do not live on tribal land.

latter would be less able to rely on funding from tribal governments. The more diverse universe of “major” funding sources for urban/suburban organizations includes individual contributions, revenue from the sale of art and services, business contributions, event admissions income, state government funding, foundation grants, membership dues, and even federal government funding. To be sure, rural organizations rely on these revenue sources as well – they are simply much less likely to be sources of significant budgetary support. Finally, it should be noted that very few organizations, wherever their location, can rely on endowments or tribal gaming distributions as a major source of operating funding.

Figure 5. Percentage of Urban/Suburban and Rural Native Cultural Arts Organizations Reporting “Major” Revenue from Source



These two revenue profiles – of rural organizations’ greater reliance on tribal government support and non-rural organizations’ greater reliance on other, perhaps more diverse funding sources – begin to flesh out different technical assistance needs and approaches. If correct, the profiles suggest that leaders of rural organizations, with their closer ties to tribal governments, may need training on the importance of diversifying funding sources and information on how to do so. For example, though many claim to receive funding from businesses, membership dues, endowments, etc., rural organizations may need help in further tapping these revenue sources, a strategy that can protect them in the event of diminished tribal support. Urban and suburban organizations, already experiencing this reality, may be more in need of assistance in maintaining multiple revenue sources and sustaining relationships with multiple funders.

Findings on Location, Organizational Type, and Serious Needs

The survey also asked organizations to list their most serious needs. Only one was noted by a majority of organizations – as mentioned above, over 50% reported a serious need for fundraising help. Needs become clearer when considered by the organizations’ locations and types, and thus, the breakdowns provide tentative guidance on the best steps forward with technical assistance.

As noted in Figure 6, rural organizations’ greatest needs (in addition to fundraising assistance and in this order) are for marketing assistance, emergency plan development, collection conservation, and computers. Excepting collection conservation, they are also needier than urban and suburban organizations in all of these areas. Urban and suburban organizations’ greatest needs (in addition to fundraising and in this order) are for collection conservation and program/organizational promotion.

Figure 6. Serious Needs of Native Cultural Arts Organizations, by location

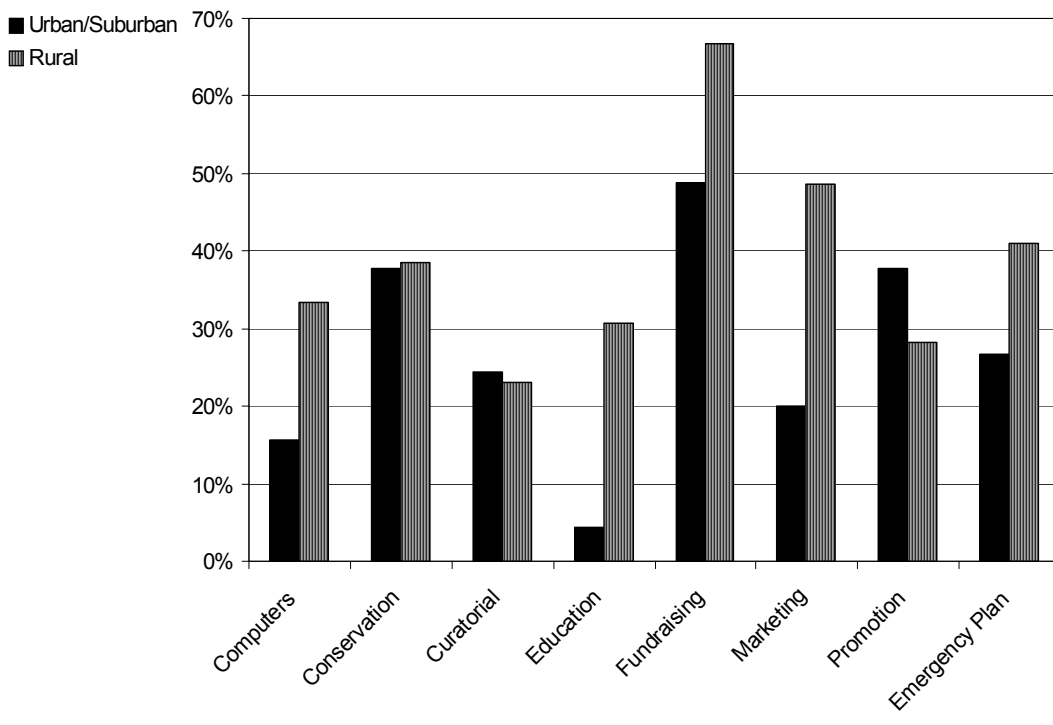
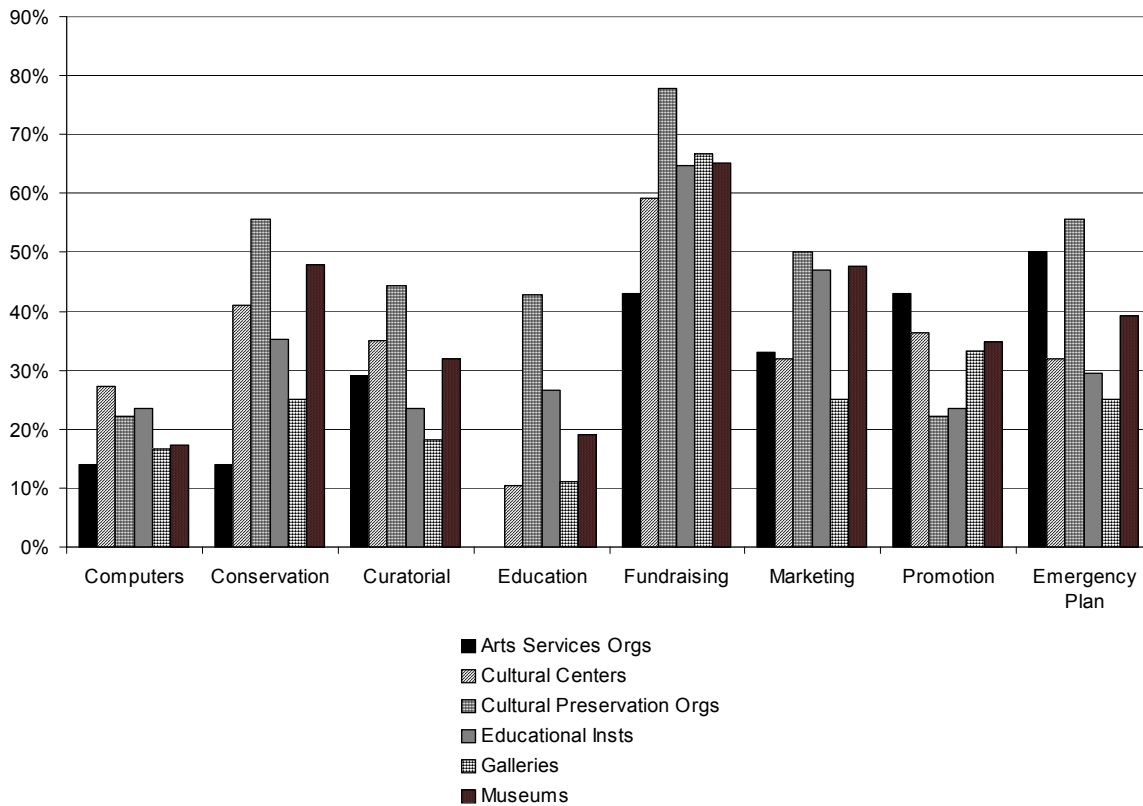


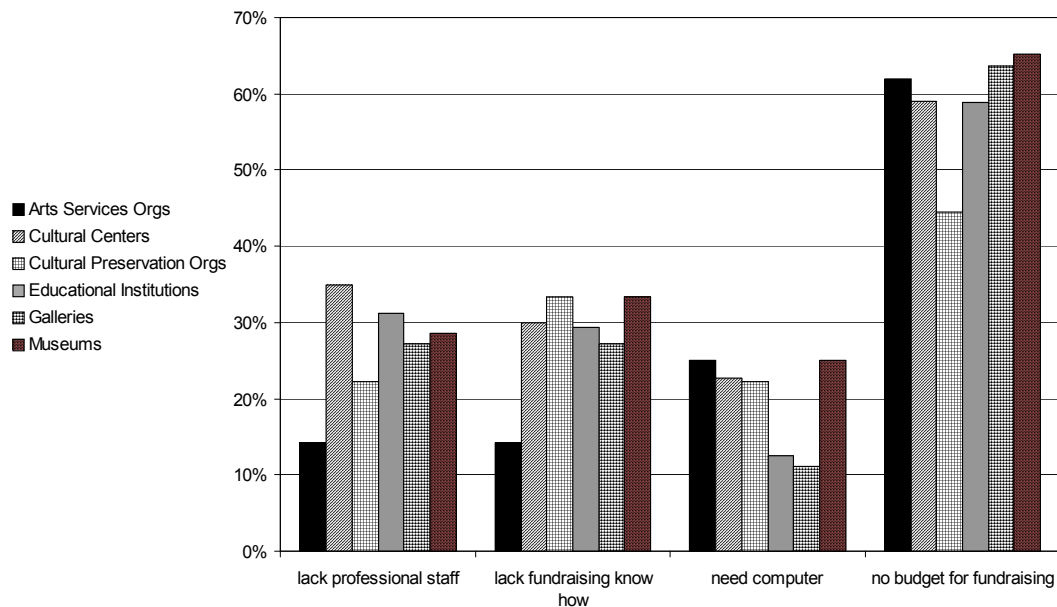
Figure 7 indicates the pattern of needs by organizational type. Arts services organizations report equally strong fundraising, promotion, and emergency plan development needs. After the ubiquitous need for fundraising assistance, cultural preservation organizations report strong needs for conservation and emergency planning assistance. For galleries, after fundraising, the second most pressing need is for program/organizational promotion, yet it should be noted that this need runs as a relatively distant second. Museums' closely clustered second, third, and fourth place needs are for marketing, conservation, and emergency planning assistance. Educational institutions report a relatively strong second-place need for marketing help. And while cultural centers report a second-place need for conservation assistance, it is also remarkable that they appear relatively needy in *all* areas of support. By way of caution, the information on museum and cultural center needs is most accurate, as more than half of the organizations in the sample identified themselves as one, the other, or both.

Figure 7. Percentage of Native Cultural Arts Organizations Reporting Specific Serious Needs, by type of organization



Given the generic need for fundraising assistance, it is also useful to explore whether the organizations share common hurdles to fundraising or whether the barriers vary by organizational type. The breakdown in Figure 8 confirms the statistic reported above, that the majority of organizations (58%) lack a budget for fundraising and that this is a significant barrier to improving their finances – indeed, the chart suggests that if this problem were solved, other barriers to fundraising are surmountable.

Figure 8. Fundraising Barriers by Type of Native Cultural Arts Organization



A final caveat on this section is that while it provides clearer information about the needs of various sub-groups within the sector, it provides no information about the needs of organizational types that were poorly represented in the survey, such as performance groups, publishers, and arts agencies. To remedy this problem, more in-depth study of specific organizations or, as stated at the outset, information collection from a larger sample of Native-controlled cultural arts organizations is desirable.

A Summary of Native-Controlled Cultural Arts Organizations’ Specific Needs

Fundraising

To reiterate, many Native-controlled cultural arts organizations can be considered “fragile organizations.” Both the exploration of common characteristics and the sub-sector analysis suggest that the primary contributing factors to this fragility are the organizations’ limited budgets and weak fundraising capacities. In other words, there is a clear opportunity for Atlatl and its funders to help meet this need. Possibilities include direct grantmaking for endowment or program support and/or grantmaking targeted at

financial leverage and fundraising capacity building. Particularly for rural, tribally affiliated organizations, the latter should include technical assistance around the diversification of funding sources. As an intermediary, Atlatl can serve as a conduit for funds intended to serve these purposes; alternatively, it could design and directly provide such technical assistance to its service population

Marketing and Outreach

Certainly, Native-controlled cultural arts organizations have other needs, but in many cases, even these are connected to funding and financial sustainability. For example, many Native-controlled cultural arts organizations are involved in what might be termed the “business-arts nexus.” Sixty-eight percent of respondents receive funds from the sale of art or art products, but only 37% raised major funding through this activity. According to Figure 7, cultural preservation organizations, museums, and educational institutions are most in need of marketing assistance. By comparison to arts services organization, galleries, and cultural centers, which have lower demands for marketing assistance, it is likely that these organizations have a less clear idea of the array of art and art-related products and services they might sell. And even for the more marketing-savvy organizations, issues such as pricing and advertising may be worth exploring. In other words, it is likely that a majority of Native-controlled arts organizations have exploitable opportunities to increase earned income by scaling up their business activities – but they probably need increased direction about how to do this. Atlatl and its funders might do more to provide this education and training. Ideally, technical assistance would be tailored to sub-sectoral needs. With such support, Native arts organizations can better determine how to allocate time, energy, and other organizational resources to marketing and sales (i.e., “business”) activities.*

Good communication is important to fundraising, client service, and audience development. Not surprisingly, 52% of respondents noted that the most effective form of communication with the field was word-of-mouth. While most (82%) were equipped to communicate electronically (especially via email, but a majority had webpages, too), such communication was perceived as much less effective. Improving the effectiveness of these oftentimes more economical means of communication might not only enhance outreach but also have a tangible effect on bottom lines. This is another opportunity for Atlatl and its funders.

Organizational Structure

As noted earlier, the vast majority (86%) of Native-controlled cultural arts organizations have boards, and of these, most (74%) have boards that are composed of a majority of

* A worthy knock-on effect of such learning at the organizational level is that it might also lead to better business education and financial opportunities for artists themselves. Eighty-nine percent of surveyed organizations claimed that helping artists market their products was part of their mission, but a smaller percentage – 59% – said they managed to do this “a lot” or even “some” in their day-to-day operations. As organizations’ business savvy increases, so might their ability to connect artists to markets or train artists in marketing, sales, and business practices.

Native people or are entirely Native. It should be noted, however, that while having board members with similar profiles may help the organizations maintain mission focus, it is also possible that limited diversity limits the organizations in other ways. For example, this lack of diversity may make certain marketing and fundraising opportunities less obvious and, thus, exacerbate funding problems. Significantly, monolithic boards also cut off important avenues for advocacy: it is not uncommon for atypical board members to be converted to the “cause” of the organization that has invited them to serve and for them to become some of its most ardent advocates and promoters. Given that 93% of responding organizations have an advocacy goal of presenting Native perspectives (especially their artistic perspectives), tapping this advocacy potential may be warranted.

In sum, increased board diversity may be a worthwhile goal for many Native cultural arts organizations. Yet achieving this goal is not an easy task – it requires imagining the kind of non-Native individuals who might bring most benefit to the board and recruiting them, it requires attention to board policies so that critical control of the organization and its mission does unintentionally pass into the wrong hands, and it requires board training so that the newly diverse group can work well together. Again, these needs define a possible role for Atlatl.

Programs and Facilities

Here it must be reiterated that respondent organizations’ most frequently reported facilities-related need is a need for adequate storage space – but that the specific need ought to be better understood before supportive remedial action is taken. A good next step for Atlatl or others in the field would be to more specifically survey this need. This attempt would do well to focus on the related needs identified in the sub-field breakdown – for example, over 40% of responding cultural centers, cultural preservation organizations, and museums have conservation-related needs and over 40% of arts services organization, cultural preservation organizations, and museums had emergency plan development needs.

On the joint programs and facilities front, it may be necessary to promote the formation and sustainability of organizations that support artists directly (organizations that provide artists with work space, put them in direct contact with their markets, train them in business skills or leadership, and so on). There were few such entities in the survey sample, and if the sample is representative, the implication is that seeking to remedy this absence helps ensure the vitality of Native American art.

Mission Clarification – for Clients and Atlatl Itself

In response to the set question, “Is loss of Native language skills an issue in your community?” 82% of respondents said “yes,” and a majority said their organization was not addressing the problem well. Additionally, the survey finds that the majority of organizations responding serve a population that speaks English fluently and knows little to nothing of the Native language. Not surprisingly, language skill loss was an issue virtually across the board for cultural centers, cultural preservation offices, and museums responding to the survey, while somewhat less frequently identified as a concern by other

respondent organizations. While the survey did not query whether language preservation and promotion was a part of the surveyed organizations' missions, the disjunction between the identified importance of the issue and the organizations' success in meeting it is noteworthy, especially among those organizations closely tied to a specific tribal community. Moreover, if such goals are not reflected in those organizations' missions, they probably ought to be – and there may thus be a need among Native-controlled cultural arts organizations for mission review and refinement and a rematching of program activities to mission goals. Services in support of such visioning exercises might prove helpful.

Ultimately, Atlatl itself might benefit from similar mission and program refinement work. There are many needs in the diverse sector that it serves, and an important take-away from the survey data is that this round has only scratched the surface of that diversity. Atlatl, Inc. might be most effective if it avoids being everything to everyone, targets its service population more finely, and limits its interaction to being an information-only provider to organizations outside this narrower net. Certainly, there are critical decisions to be made about such a strategy. For example, should Atlatl concentrate its services on organizations that are likely to accrue the most benefit from them in terms of revenue or audience growth? Or should Atlatl consider providing services to the most underserved (which might be the case because they lack a national organization, do not have a firm connection to a specific tribal community, etc.)*? These are questions raised by this interpretation of survey results but which cannot be answered by it.

* Anecdotal evidence suggests that the most underserved Native-controlled cultural arts organizations might be the types that were least likely to answer this survey – organizations that do not identify as cultural centers, museums, cultural preservation offices. These more fringe arts and arts services organizations are not members of (for example) the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers or the American Indian Museums Program within the American Association for State and Local History, are more likely to be located in urban areas, and more likely to engage a fairly diverse Native community (including individuals with limited or indirect tribal ties).