

## Implementing a Cultural District

*The Cultural District Program (CD) is a place-based economic initiative of the state of Louisiana. It is intended to stimulate and revitalize the local economy by applying tax incentives and local resources in areas designated as cultural districts that are interested in enhancing cultural development and tourism. The CD Program provides an opportunity to create partnerships with the local government, business, arts and civic organizations to maximize cultural development and leverage state and local, public and private resources.*

Once certified, each district is encouraged to implement its own cultural development strategies and communication plan based on its own goals described in the initial application. It should establish and track its accomplishments in order to continue participating as a certified Cultural District. To assist in establishing those goals and strategies the state provides orientation and technical assistance for development. Below are steps you should be actively working on in managing your district:

- Cultural Assessment – Begun in the application, the CD may conduct a more comprehensive assessment that identifies existing and potential cultural assets. Cultural Assets List – include cultural businesses, points of interest, and artists producing cultural products. Maintain a Business List – list of active businesses in the CD, tagging businesses that may handle and sell original art products – which will be required to submit every year.
- Establish an Advisory Team – local stakeholders dedicated to the revitalization of the district and support of cultural entrepreneurs, institutions, agencies and workers. The team should consist of people with expertise and interest in economic development, arts and cultural activity, community identity building, promotion and communication. Suggest a member take notes to record ideas and decisions.
- Develop a Cultural District Plan – drawing from the assessment process produce a plan to implement goals that enhance the districts cultural assets through art programs, preservation, interpretation, marketing, and cultural entrepreneurship
  - Prioritize cultural activities, events and development efforts
  - Partner with organizations to leverage resources
  - Identify priority areas in cultural development where new investment is needed
  - Identify private partners and sponsors to assist and enhance the cultural economy
- Communication Strategy
  - Branding and Marketing– consider ways to identify the district for promotion
    - Traditional campaigns include the following: print marketing, direct mail marketing, digital/social media marketing, email marketing, signage (banners, yard signs, etc), and phone calls. An annual event also helps drive awareness.
  - Define and implement methods of communication with businesses and residents

- Performance Measures – Be mindful of measurements that show impact of cultural activity such as number of events, attendance, new businesses including which are art/cultural. These will help prepare for questions asked in the annual report.

#### Cultural District Plan

- Define a clear purpose for your district, based on its unique, authentic assets, that will enhance local economic activity and opportunity
- Set a succinct mission statement for your CD Advisory Team
- Prioritize issues within the District into short and long range strategies

Your Cultural District Plan should include a section on *how you will measure the success of your District activities, events, projects and activities*. These performance measures are important for your CD Advisory Team and staff to:

- Evaluate the CD goals and strategies
- Evaluate the impact of creative output in the district such as number of people benefitting
- Evaluate the impact on the community's quality of life
- Evaluate the impact of targeted investment on projects, activities or events
- Seek future funding from both private and public sector
- Evaluate successes and failures
- Look at opportunities for cross-collaborations with other certified CDs, regional, or across the state
- Include findings in Annual Reports

Your Cultural District Plan should be incremental and goal oriented. Start with small incremental projects that you have the resources to do successfully. Make sure those projects and activities build incrementally toward your goals. Make sure the projects and activities you are investing in fit into the larger, comprehensive picture of what you want your CD to become.

Be mindful of ways to gage annual changes in the economic impact of the district in one or more of these areas:

- Economic impact to arts and cultural organizations, institutions and agencies developing products and programs produced in the district
- Economic impact on cultural workers (artists, artisans, craft workers)
- Economic impact on cultural entrepreneurs (new business start up and development)
- Economic impact of original art sales- number of artists, businesses, art markets, consumers
- Impact of marketing efforts for the district
- Impact on Cultural & Heritage Tourism
  - Hotels, Motels, B&Bs
  - Restaurants
- Impact in other areas of Cultural and Arts retail - goods and services (per capita income)
  - Book Stores
  - Music Stores
  - Photography stores
  - Film and digital media production

- Art Galleries
- Redevelopment Impacts
  - Creating live/work studio space
  - Adaptive reuse of historic properties
  - Infill housing and second floor conversion of buildings for housing that is affordable to artists
- Building vacancy
- Development of public markets within the district
- Development of performance space within the district