Data Sources

To conduct the work we undertook in Southeast Michigan, we had to locate and obtain data on four aspects of the arts and culture ecosystem:

- **Data on arts organizations**
- **Capitalization data**
- **Demographic data**
- **Cultural preferences data**

We examined dozens of data sets before settling on fifteen, upon which our platform was built and the findings in *A Portrait of the Cultural Ecosystem* are based.

To understand the **scope and activities** of arts and cultural organizations in SE Michigan, we relied upon data from five main sources:

1. Our primary source of information on for-profit creative enterprises was the InfoGroup USA Business Database

2. For nonprofit organizations, our primary source for historical data was the National Center for Charitable Statistics, which provided us with data from the IRS Business Master File, NCCS Core Files, and additional custom data from IRS Forms 990

3. Current data on nonprofit arts organizations was obtained from GuideStar

4. For unincorporated entities, we drew upon information from Fractured Atlas' database of fiscally-sponsored organizations

5. We also obtained data on unincorporated entities from Kickstarter's project database for the Detroit-metro area

To assess **capitalization patterns** across the cultural sector, we relied upon the following six sources:

1. Data on the revenue sources of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations was obtained from IRS Forms 990 provided to us by the National Center for Charitable Statistics

2. Data on federal support for art organizations was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

3. Data on state support for arts organizations was provided by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

4. Data on local public support for arts organizations was obtained through primary research in the Detroit area

5. Data on foundation support for the arts was provided by the Foundation Center

6. Information on crowd-sourced funding was provided by Kickstarter

To document **demographic trends,** we obtained data from two main sources:

1. For national demographic data, we relied on the Census Bureau's American FactFinder tool

2. Demographic data on SE Michigan (including future projections) was obtained from PolicyMap, based on data from the U.S. Decennial Census and the American Community Survey

To understand **cultural preferences and arts participation trends,** we relied on three primary data sources:

1. For national data on arts participation, we pulled data from the three most recent waves of the National Endowment for the Arts' Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts

2. For data on local cultural preferences, we used data from Scarborough Research

3. Data on the programmatic activities of nonprofit arts organizations was provided by the Cultural Data Project

There are specific limitations associated with each of these data sources. Some are partial, others are more complete. Some only have data from recent years, others have trend data. Some of the trend data goes back to 1990; in other cases, it only goes back to 2002. Some are based on national samples that cannot be analyzed at the regional or local level; others are strictly regional in focus. Comparisons across data sets are often problematic; questions asked in one survey are not identical to questions asked in other surveys.

It is particularly difficult to find good data on the giving of private individuals. The data we have on giving by private foundations is largely restricted to the giving of the largest 1,000 foundations in the country. Very little data exists on unincorporated entities, although what data we have suggests that they are rapidly growing in number.

The questions we would most like to answer are often those for which specific data do not exist. In these cases, we must sometimes rely on inexact proxies that get close to answering our questions.

In short, the field's current "information infrastructure" only obliquely captures the breadth and diversity of arts activity today. Existings and emerging data collection strategies must co-evolve in step with the field if we are to have the intelligence we need to understand and leverage the forces that are driving change in the sector.