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# A Report to the People of Maine from the Maine Cultural Affairs Council The New Century Community Program

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**A Report to the People of Maine from the Maine Cultural Affairs Council**

*The New Century  
Community Program:  
Building a Cultural Policy For Maine*



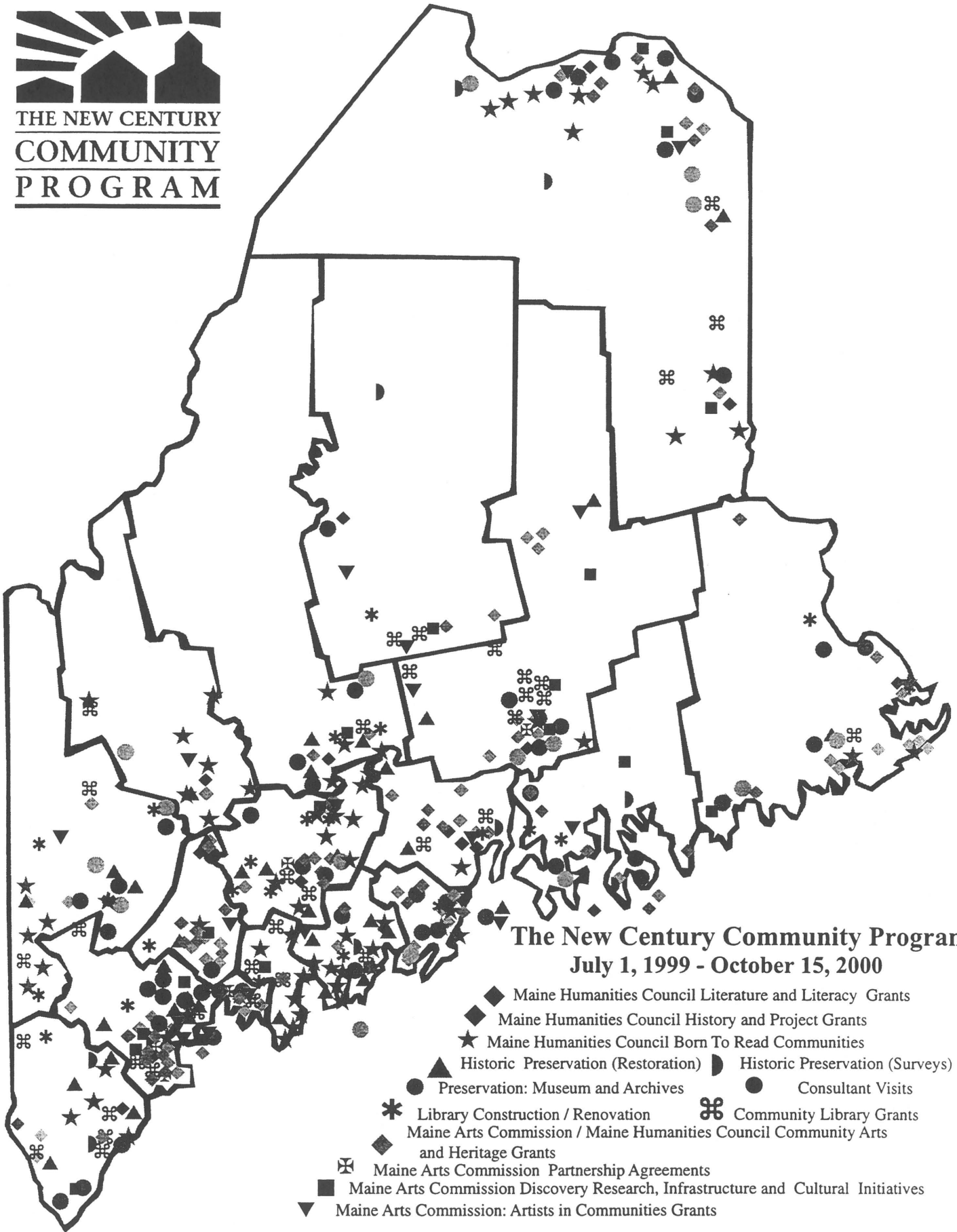
**THE NEW CENTURY  
COMMUNITY  
PROGRAM**

Maine Arts Commission  
Maine Historical Society  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
Maine Humanities Council  
Maine State Archives  
Maine State Library  
Maine State Museum

September, 2002



THE NEW CENTURY  
COMMUNITY  
PROGRAM



# Executive Summary

## I. A Cultural Policy for Maine

Like its forests, rivers, and other kinds of infrastructure, Maine's cultural heritage, a valuable but fragile asset, is subject to decay, neglect, misuse, and loss of memory. The Maine Cultural Affairs Council and its seven member agencies urge the adoption of a cultural policy for Maine parallel to the state's existing environmental, agricultural, and economic policies. Building on the effectiveness of the New Century Community Program and reflecting Maine's continuing arts and cultural needs, the policy should encompass the following elements:

- an ongoing constellation of grants, direct program services and technical assistance to Maine communities through the Council and its members;
- a biennial appropriation from the Maine State Legislature at the level of \$6 million per year; and
- a consistent and stable level of funding from year to year to be supplemented by contributions from other donors, public and private.

## II. The New Century Community Program: Outcomes and Impacts

Maine's New Century Community Program (NCCP) is a unique public-private partnership of seven state-wide cultural agencies working together through the Maine Cultural Affairs Council (MCAC) to provide a large-scale arts and cultural development program to Maine's communities. The NCCP was designed to support a wide range of arts and cultural activities in Maine communities with three general objectives:

- to advance the economic and social development of these communities by strengthening their arts and cultural resources;
- to expand the access of their residents to library and other educational resources; and
- to preserve Maine's historic resources, properties, artifacts, and documents.

In 1999, the NCCP received funding from the Maine State Legislature of \$3.2 million for FY 2000, and reauthorization funding of just over \$1 million for the biennium FY 2002-FY 2003. In April, 2002, the legislature allocated an additional \$200,000 to the program in the belief that the NCCP was an effective state investment even at a time of budgetary stringency. Because of the state's current budgetary crisis, the funding for FY 2002-FY 2003 was subsequently reduced to \$971,758, the level at this writing.

As shown in the foregoing map of Maine, the initial \$3.2 million in funding supported 742 projects in 183 communities in virtually every region of Maine. Of that amount, \$2.5 million was in the form of 517 grants, and the balance supported direct program services and technical-assistance activities. The grants leveraged additional funding from other sources amounting to \$9 million in cash and \$1.3 million in in-kind services. Statistics on the second round of funding in FY 2002 are now being compiled.

The NCCP's unique partnership and its potential impact on the state's economic and cultural future have generated considerable interest both within Maine and generally in the arts and cultural policy field throughout the country. Responding to this interest, the MCAC, with funding from four private foundations, engaged Mt. Auburn Associates of Somerville, Massachusetts, to undertake an independent study of the NCCP and the effectiveness of its initial round of funding. Mt. Auburn Associates concluded that the NCCP provides an important model of effective statewide investment in arts and culture for both Maine and the rest of the country. The study cited the following achievements:

- The program used relatively limited state resources to create substantial benefits in communities throughout Maine. Its cash grants and other assistance have helped to preserve the history and cultural legacy of the state and to ensure that visitors, residents, and future generations are able to understand what is uniquely Maine.
- While the long-term impact of these activities is impossible to assess after only two years, a survey of grantees as well as in-depth case studies revealed that the program is building "social capital," enhancing the state's cultural tourism product, promoting increased literacy and workforce skills, and adding to the quality of life in many communities in all parts of the state.
- While these outcomes cannot yet be fully translated into direct economic impacts, the evidence is clear that they are all important factors in improving the long-term economic health of Maine.<sup>1</sup>

In July, 2002, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the major funder of the Mt. Auburn study, released a report listing Maine among ten states that have led the way in developing reliable statewide funding programs for arts and culture through coalitions of public and private agencies. The Pew report, *Policy Partners: Making the Case for State Investments in Culture*, was supplemented by a second publication, *The Voice of State Legislators*, analyzing the Maine Legislature's decision to support the NCCP.

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<sup>1</sup> A Landmark study commissioned by the New England Foundation for the Arts, *The Creative Economy Initiative*, determined in 2000 that 245,000 New Englanders earn \$4.4 billion annually in "the Creative Economy". For copies, [www.nefa.org/creativeeconomy](http://www.nefa.org/creativeeconomy)

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## I. A Cultural Policy for the State of Maine

### The Need for a Cultural Policy

The time has come to recognize that Maine's cultural heritage is a valuable but fragile asset. Like its forests and rivers, and other kinds of infrastructure, Maine's cultural heritage is subject to decay, neglect, misuse, and loss of memory. In a climate of intense social change and pressure for development, the things we hold most dear can easily be destroyed or sold too cheaply. In some cases, they can be lost forever.

One major lesson of the past century is that important community assets, if they are to endure, require constant nurture – political vision, clear policies, dependable investment, and farsighted planning. We know, for example, that school buildings leak, bridges weaken with age, highways crumble with use, clean water is threatened with pollution and drought, the stocks of deer and moose can dwindle. In these and other similar areas of importance to our lives, Maine State Government has developed policies to preserve and strengthen valuable assets and to address the natural consequences of neglect.

Not so for Maine's cultural heritage, one of the most distinctive and celebrated in America. To its earliest Native American legacy, Maine adds nearly 400 years of recorded history, beginning with the European fishermen who used Damariscove Island as a base well before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. Many peoples followed and are still following: French, English, Irish, Scots, Acadians, Swedes, Italians, Poles, Cambodians, Hispanics, Sudanese, and more. Their history and art, their buildings, artifacts and records, their living expressions, occupations, and traditions are the raw materials of Maine's unique heritage.

Maine's demography, moreover, makes its cultural heritage particularly vulnerable. We are a state of small cities, towns and villages – one-half of the population live in communities of 6,000 or fewer – and these communities are scattered over an area nearly as large as the rest of New England. Dispersed and often isolated, Maine's communities depend on a constellation of hard pressed arts and cultural institutions to preserve the cultural assets essential to ensure a rewarding quality of life and to attract the visitors and investors who are so economically necessary.

### Building a Cultural Policy for Maine

#### First Steps

Until recently, there had been no comprehensive statewide planning efforts to protect Maine's cultural heritage. This began to change in 1999, when the Maine Cultural Affairs Council, composed of seven

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state-wide cultural agencies, undertook an unprecedented collaborative effort. The result was the New Century Community Program (NCCP) and a request to the Maine State Legislature for funding. The legislature allocated \$3.2 million to the program for FY 2000, followed by an additional \$1 million for the FY 2002-FY 2003 biennium. This funding went entirely to technical and grant support for community cultural projects throughout the state.

Section II of this report is a summary, based on an exhaustive external evaluation, of how the first round of funds was used and the impact it had in communities in every part of the state. Clearly, the NCCP provides an important first step in building a long overdue cultural policy for Maine, and it calls for sustained and dedicated follow-up action.

## **Policy Goals**

To what extent do the results of the NCCP suggest a cultural policy for Maine? There is still much work to do, but we think the guidelines are beginning to come clear.

A cultural policy for Maine must try to achieve the following broad goals:

- 1. Geography**

Give attention to both rural and urban sections of Maine.

- 2. People**

Stimulate and use the creative talents of Maine people, recognize the fact and value of their diversity, address illiteracy where it continues to exist, and encourage life-long learning.

- 3. Heritage**

Preserve, disseminate, and celebrate the history of the state in all its forms, both locally and state-wide.

- 4. Organizations**

Recognize the key social and economic role played by non-profit arts and cultural organizations and help them build their capacity and prosper.

- 5. Community**

Strengthen connections and relationships within communities that lead to increased civic involvement, community pride, and new programming opportunities.

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## 6. **Support Base**

Develop a public-private partnership for the financial support of a statewide cultural policy by enlisting the generous participation of corporations, grant-making foundations and individuals.

## **Implementation**

What is the best method for devising and implementing such a policy? Again, there are some clear guidelines.

### 1. **The role of the Maine Cultural Affairs Council**

Each of the agencies in the MCAC has a state-wide mandate to serve the cultural needs of the people of Maine. Through cooperation, coordination, and the involvement of constituencies throughout the state, the MCAC is in a position to both suggest and implement a cultural policy for the state.

### 2. **Using community grants**

Competitive grants empower local organizations and communities, while being extremely cost effective. Grants help focus intentions, stimulate creativity, lead to action, and leverage new financial resources. MCAC members are experienced grant administrators and know how to use grants to achieve balance and broad programming objectives.

### 3. **Matching funds**

Grants should be awarded on a matching basis to broaden the base of philanthropic support for community organizations and to give them the experience and confidence to continue seeking private support.

### 4. **Investing in new state-wide cultural initiatives**

Some projects have the potential to achieve many cultural goals at once, thus promising far-reaching public benefits. This is especially true in the field of technology. Such initiatives should be identified and supported.

## **Funding**

What is the right amount of money for a state to apply to implement its cultural policy? The answer, of course, depends on many factors, some of which affect all budgeting within the state. While being culturally rich, Maine is not an economically wealthy state, and the demands on limited resources are strenuous.

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But the NCCP shows what even a modest investment of state funding can do. For FY 2000, the program received a one-time appropriation of \$3.2 million, or approximately 0.1 percent of the total state budget. The impacts of this investment, we believe, were stunning, in terms of both the constructive use of the funds and the funding generated from other sources.

To sustain these impacts, however, and to continue to promote Maine's cultural development two conditions must be met.

➤ **Funding must reflect the need.**

The local demand for NCCP grants far outstripped the funding. This is not surprising, but it does point to the fact that cultural matters in Maine are a significant unmet community need. *We believe that the legislature should provide an appropriation of \$6 million per year per biennium.* This still amounts to less than \$5 per person and only 0.2 percent of the total biennial budget, an extremely modest sum but a place to begin and one that recognizes the state's need to balance many social priorities.

➤ **Funding must be ongoing and stable.**

While one-time appropriations and token increases are not meaningless, a sustainable cultural policy can only be maintained with the expectation of consistent, stable, annual funding.

## **The Larger Rationale**

Can the state of Maine afford to have a cultural policy? We believe the proper question is whether Maine can afford *not* to have one. Maine's cultural heritage embodies two kinds of related capital, one social and one financial. Both must be conserved. Social capital, as the following report reminds us, includes the networks, norms and forms of trust that underlie the successful functioning of a community and enhance its civic life. An effective cultural policy helps build the state's social capital, and in doing so makes Maine a better place to live in and a better place to visit.

And it is the perception of visitors that drives tourism and puts financial capital in every Maine coffer. Why, in fact, do people visit Maine? Because of its beauty and great natural environment, of course, but also because it has come to represent a slightly different way of life: more considered, more communal, one in which the past and the present have a continuity, one in which the creative spirit and tradition maintain a kind of harmony. The difference that Maine offers us all is cultural as well as natural, and that difference must be preserved and nourished.

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## II. The New Century Community Program: Outcomes and Impacts

### A Unique Public-Private Partnership

Maine's New Century Community Program (NCCP) is a unique public-private partnership of seven state-wide cultural agencies working together through the Maine Cultural Affairs Council (MCAC) to provide a large-scale arts and cultural development program to Maine's communities. Five of the MCAC partners are public agencies – the Maine Arts Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine State Archives, Maine State Library, and Maine State Museum. Two of the partners are private organizations – the Maine Humanities Council and Maine Historical Society.

In the session of the Maine State Legislature ending in June, 1999, the NCCP received funding of \$3.2 million for use in FY 2000, and in the 2001 session reauthorization funding of just over \$1 million for use in the biennium FY 2002-FY 2003. In April, 2002, the legislature allocated an additional \$200,000 to the program in the belief that the NCCP was an important and effective state investment even at a time of budgetary stringency. Because of the state's current budgetary crisis, the funding for FY 2002-FY 2003 was subsequently reduced to \$971,758, the level at this writing.

This *Report to the People of Maine* summarizes the use of the initial round of \$3.2 million and an independent evaluation of the NCCP by an external agency, Mt. Auburn Associates of Somerville, Massachusetts. Statistics on the second round of funding in FY 2002 are now being compiled.

### Learning from the New Century Program

The New Century Community Program was designed to support a wide range of arts and cultural activities throughout Maine, with the following objectives:

- to advance the economic and social development of Maine's communities by strengthening their arts and cultural resources;
- to expand the access of their residents to library and educational resources; and
- to preserve Maine's historic resources, properties, artifacts, and documents.

These areas were carefully chosen to reflect the intersections of the cultural programming of each of the seven agencies and to respond to specific needs within Maine.

The program's unique partnership and its potential impact on the state's economic and cultural future have generated considerable interest both within Maine and generally in the arts and cultural policy field

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throughout the country. What is compelling about the NCCP as a model of state cultural policy is:

- the recognition by state policymakers that investing in arts and cultural activities at the community level is critical to the quality of life and the economic well-being of those communities;
- NCCP's innovative collaboration of cultural agencies both inside and outside state government to design a statewide development program and advocate for a joint legislative appropriation;
- NCCP's effective use of scarce state resources to strengthen a diverse set of community-based cultural institutions throughout Maine; and
- the insights provided through NCCP's authorization and reauthorization process into how arts and cultural organizations can more effectively communicate with state policymakers.

Responding to this interest, the MCAC requested and obtained support totaling \$170,000 from four private foundations for an independent study of the evolution and impact of the NCCP. Most of this funding came from the Pew Charitable Trusts. In addition, the MCAC received support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Maine-based Davis Family Foundation, and the Maine Community Foundation.

MCAC engaged for the external evaluation Mt. Auburn Associates, a Somerville, Massachusetts, organization, which specializes in the design, implementation, and evaluation of community development programs, and is familiar with Maine communities through previous assignments in the state.

In carrying out the study, Mt. Auburn Associates used a range of data gathering and analysis techniques, including:

- interviews with all key stakeholders in the MCAC.
  - development and analysis of a database on all of the applicants and grantees in conjunction with staff of the MCAC agencies;
  - a survey of all of the grantees;
  - in-depth one-on-one interviews with 20 state legislators and policymakers involved in both the authorization and the reauthorization process. These interviews took place following the 2001 legislative session to ensure that the process was not influenced by the interviews;
  - case studies of NCCP's impact on four communities and one case study of a grant with statewide scope. The case studies were completed on-site and involved extensive interviews with grantees
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and community leaders; and

- observation of the meetings of the MCAC during the reauthorization process.

Mt. Auburn Associates then produced two reports:

*Implementing the New Century Community Program: An Evaluation of the First Round of Funding.* This is a detailed program evaluation analyzing how the initial funding for the program was used and whether the program achieved the public benefits anticipated in its design.

*From Concept to Authorization: A History of the Maine New Century Community Program.* This is a detailed legislative history of the NCCP, providing new insights into the factors that affect the success of cultural agencies in making the case for the importance of arts and culture to statewide policymakers and the public.

This *Report to the People of Maine* summarizes the key findings from both of these reports, using tables prepared by Mt. Auburn Associates. Copies of the complete reports are available on request from the MCAC.

## History of the NCCP

The Maine Cultural Affairs Council was created in 1991 when four state agencies – the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine State Library, Maine Arts Commission, and Maine State Museum – were separated from the Department of Education. Its mandate was to coordinate budget requests, provide a forum for interagency planning, and be a formal liaison for interactions with other state agencies. Over time, the Maine Humanities Council, Maine Historical Society, and Maine State Archives joined the MCAC.

Following the economic recession in the early 1990s, when the state member agencies underwent significant cuts in their state appropriations, the MCAC partners developed the concept of a cooperative appropriation request. The partners met frequently to define the goals and priorities of such a request, leading eventually to the design of the New Century Community Program.

Once the elements of the request were worked out, the MCAC turned to the task of securing the authorization and funding of the program from the Maine State Legislature. The partners worked collaboratively to develop an effective argument, engage state legislators, develop effective materials, mobilize their constituencies, and design an effective communication strategy. While the MCAC did not receive its entire funding request, it did receive a one-time-only, one-year, appropriation of \$3.2 million in the 1999 legislative session.

After the initial funds were allocated and the program implemented in FY 2000, the MCAC sought reauthorization during the 2001 legislative session. But the MCAC was now facing a different

legislative climate. Because of term limits, many new legislators were not familiar with the program. More important was the drastically changed budget environment. While a budget surplus in 1999 opened the door to new discretionary initiatives such as the NCCP, in 2001 Maine faced a large deficit and many competing priorities.

However, the MCAC built on, and effectively documented, the successful track record of the NCCP, and mobilized the support of the more than 400 organizations that had benefitted from the first round of funding. As a result, the MCAC was able to make an effective case that the NCCP had achieved substantial public benefits, and it was able to communicate that case to state legislators. In July, 2001, the NCCP was reauthorized with \$1 million in funding and designated as having on-going budget status as opposed to the one-time-only status that it had in 1999.

## **How Was the First Round of Funding Used?**

While each agency involved in the NCCP developed its own programmatic focus and grantmaking process, the MCAC worked collaboratively to develop principles to guide its grantmaking activities. These principles included encouraging projects that: 1) incorporated a strategy for implementation and evaluation; 2) involved local residents and community organizations; 3) involved collaborative efforts at the community level; 4) related project goals to community social and economic needs; and 5) matched state resources with other funds on a one-to-one basis.

During the first round of funding, Mt. Auburn Associates reported, the NCCP supported 742 projects in 183 Maine communities. Most of the \$3.2 million in funding was distributed within one year, and almost all of the projects had been completed by the 2001 legislative session. The allocation of these funds by agency – both for grants and technical assistance – is shown in the foregoing map of Maine and detailed in Table No. 1 “Allocation of First Round” at the end of this section.

Specific activities supported by MCAC partners through the NCCP were:

- The Maine State Library provided matching grants to community libraries for critical construction projects and expansion of their services.
  - The Maine Historic Preservation Commission provided grants to restore historic buildings and sites in the state and for surveys to identify and evaluate archaeological and historic sites as well as historic buildings and districts.
  - The Maine State Archives and Maine State Museum provided matching grants and technical support for the preservation of historic records, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, artifacts, and scientific specimens.
  - The Maine Humanities Council partnered with the Maine Arts Commission to provide small grants for community-based programs involving oral histories, photography exhibits, and other
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heritage-based activities.

- The Maine Humanities Council expanded its family literacy and reading programs throughout the state and developed a grant program to assist communities in exploring their history.
- The Maine Arts Commission provided grants to help communities assess and develop their cultural resources and for arts-in-education activities by schools and arts organizations.
- The Maine Historical Society designed and implemented the Maine Memory Network, a Web-based virtual museum and educational resource accessible to all computer-equipped state residents and organizations.

Of the \$3.2 million distributed, \$2.5 million was in the form of grants and the balance supported direct program services and technical-assistance activities. The use of these funds for specific program purposes is given in Table No. 2 “Grants and Projects by Program.”

In its examination of how the first round of NCCP resources were used, Mt. Auburn Associates also found:

***Maine communities responded with a high level of demand for the NCCP, with agencies able to fund only a portion of the funding requests.***

The NCCP partners received a total of 661 grant applications for a total requested amount of over \$6 million. Overall, a total of 517 projects were funded, and 42 percent of the requested funding was distributed to grantees. See Table No. 3 “Funded Grants.”

***The NCCP grants were widely distributed throughout Maine, reaching all counties and both rural and urban communities throughout the state.***

An analysis of the geographic distribution of the NCCP projects and funding provides strong evidence that the partner agencies have reached both urban and rural communities. As Table No. 4 “Distribution of Grants by County” and Table No. 5 “Distribution of Projects by County,” indicate, while there was some variation in the level of grants and projects in the different counties, every county in Maine received some benefits from the NCCP funding. Further, as Table No. 6 “Distribution of Grants by Size of Community” indicates, both large and small communities shared in this funding.

***The NCCP was able to reach many small cultural organizations through effective outreach services and technical assistance at all stages of the program.***

The MCAC and its member agencies recognized from the outset that many of the state’s cultural organizations had limited experience in writing grants or implementing funded projects. As a result, the NCCP partners provided a high level of technical assistance to community organizations throughout

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Maine during both the grant application process and subsequent program implementation. Approximately two-thirds of the grantees surveyed reported receiving some form of assistance from their funders, and more than 90 percent found this assistance “very useful.” Many small cultural organizations, moreover, received grants from any source for the first time.

***The NCCP was able to stretch limited state resources through effective leveraging.***

Through its matching requirements, the NCCP was able to leverage additional funding from other public and private sources. The requirements for a 1:1 match for grant funds were more than met. In fact, according to the grantees, they matched the \$2.5 million grant funding with an additional \$9 million in cash and \$1.3 million in in-kind services.

## **Have the Anticipated Benefits of the NCCP Been Achieved?**

Grantees report a wide range of impacts associated with the NCCP grants. In Mt. Auburn Associates’ survey, all of the grantees were asked to identify the impacts associated with their grants. Their responses (found in Table No. 7 “Grantee Perception of the Results of the New Century Grants”) indicate the diversity of these impacts and the ways in which the program achieved many of the initial objectives set out by the MCAC.

In evaluating a public program, Mt. Auburn Associates contends, it is also important to question whether the actions taken were dependent upon receiving the public funding or might have been accomplished with other funding sources. Each grantee was asked, as part of the survey, what would have occurred if NCCP funding were not available. A summary of the responses indicates that 42 percent of all of the grantees stated that they would not have proceeded at all without NCCP funding. Another 53 percent would have had either to delay or to scale back their projects.

Based on its grantee survey and its in-depth case studies, Mt. Auburn Associates found that NCCP had made many positive social and economic impacts on Maine communities. These impacts included the following:

### **Strengthening “Social Capital”**

“Social capital” includes the networks, norms, and social trust that underlie the successful functioning of a community and enhance its civic life. Based on its analysis of the early effects of NCCP, Mt. Auburn Associates believes that in the strengthening of “social capital” the NCCP may have its most enduring and far-reaching impact on Maine communities. Further, while it is difficult to document the specific economic benefits associated with “social capital,” there is growing recognition that it is a prerequisite to the maintenance and development of a healthy economy.

Specifically, the NCCP has helped to build community “social capital” in three ways:

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- by enhancing community self-image and rebuilding a sense of community pride;
- by increasing civic involvement through new events that involve the community, new spaces for the community to meet, and new volunteer opportunities for residents; and
- by strengthening connections and relationships within communities, particularly among previously disparate or unconnected organizations. In many cases, these improvements resulted in more efficient delivery of community services, development of new community programs, and/or improved funding opportunities.

As Mt. Auburn Associates points out, building pride of place is particularly important in rural communities and older industrial areas where a poor self-image exacerbates the continued loss of population and economic activity. While it is difficult to measure the change in a community's self-image, the number of interviewees and survey respondents who noted the impact of the NCCP on community pride and image was unexpected. For example, a librarian receiving a Maine State Library Construction Grant reported, "The expanded/renovated library is a source of civic pride. Anyone who comes into the library can see that the community is a place of substance, a place to be reckoned with."

### **Building the Capacity of Arts and Cultural Organizations**

The NCCP has helped to build the organizational capacity of many of the state's libraries, arts and cultural institutions, historic sites, and important cultural tourism assets. As part of the survey, grantees were asked to rank their capacity along a number of dimensions before they received the NCCP grant or service and after the project was completed. In every area, the overall ranking increased following completion of the project. Organizations with budgets of less than \$100,000 were most likely to report an increase in capacity in fund-raising and diversifying their sources of support. The challenge of getting matching grants helped them get the confidence they needed to pursue other sources of funding.

### **Preserving Critical Historic Structures, Documents, and Artifacts**

The first round of New Century funding resulted in the preservation of at least 35 historic structures, the restoration and preservation of thousands of historic documents and artifacts, and the development of the organizational infrastructure essential to the management of the state's historic assets.

As no state funding had been available for the preservation of Maine's historic buildings since a state bond issue in the late 1980s, the NCCP supported the renovation of historic structures that had experienced years of deferred maintenance. Further, most of the artifacts and documents saved by the preservation grants were in danger of permanent or irreparable damage. Preserving the history of Maine's diverse peoples – including the Native Americans, European settler groups, French Canadians, and the special communities of African Americans, Shakers, and more recent arrivals from Asia and Africa – was seen by many grantees as critical to preserving Maine's cultural legacy.



## Building the Skills of the State's Residents

A key component of the NCCP is the literacy effort of the Maine Humanities Council, targeting both preschool children and functionally illiterate adults. The "Born to Read" program served 3,595 Maine children in FY 2000 alone. A separate evaluation of the program found that among the providers participating, 79 percent reported moderate to significant increase in the ability of the children to sit and listen; 71 percent reported increased vocabulary among the children; 71 percent reported that the children were using longer sentences; and 75 percent reported that the children were taking part in more conversations.

There was also anecdotal evidence of the profound impact that the Council's adult literacy programs have had on adults who were illiterate or very poor readers. One middle-aged woman from Skowhegan testified before the state legislature that, as a result of the program, she had not only learned to read, but was now teaching children and was on a path to a college education.

While it is too early to assess NCCP's role in building the skills of Maine's residents, the evaluation found that NCCP-funded projects have effectively used arts, heritage, and cultural activities to engage children in learning. In some cases, the projects involved the development of specific curriculum for elementary and secondary school students. In other cases, the projects supported events and exhibits that have been used by schools and have provided important resources to teachers throughout the state.

One example of the former category is the \$7,600 grant awarded to the Auburn School Department to use an archaeological dig for an innovative team-teaching approach combining English, mathematics, science, and history. The project, which targeted ninth graders who were performing below grade level, resulted in improved academic performance on the part of students and continued extracurricular participation among some as they progress to higher grade levels.

## Enhancing the Cultural Tourism "Product"

Mt. Auburn Associates believes that the NCCP has the greatest potential for direct economic impact in the area of tourism, one of the most important industries in Maine. Cultural tourism is an increasingly important segment of that industry, creating 14,000 jobs, generating \$1.3 billion in direct and indirect expenditures, and attracting 2.5 million travelers per year. While the focus of the state's promotion of tourism is on marketing, the NCCP is concerned with the *tourism product* — that is, enhancing the states's historic sites, cultural offerings, and other important cultural tourism attractions. Thus, NCCP grants were critical to the renovation of several historic sites and the improvement of several museum exhibits, and supported performances and venues that attracted thousands of tourists.

As just one example, in October, 2002, the Portland Museum of Art will reopen to the public two fully-restored historic buildings that housed the original museum until 1980: the McLellan House and the Lorenzo de Medici (L. D. M.) Sweat Memorial Galleries. The new museum complex is expected to attract increased visitors from out-of-state. While the Maine Preservation Commission grant to the

museum was a small component of the overall renovation costs, museum staff reported that the NCCP support was critical in raising further funds from other sources.

### **Strengthening Competitiveness of the Economy**

By increasing the state's library resources, restoring its historic assets, and creating new venues for its arts and culture, the NCCP is enhancing the quality of life in communities throughout Maine. Current economic-development literature cites increasing evidence that a good quality of life is important to maintaining the competitiveness of key targeted clusters and fostering entrepreneurial development. This is particularly important in Maine where high energy costs and a remote location increase the costs of some of the key factors considered by businesses in their investment decisions. In this environment, quality of life becomes one of Maine's most critical competitive advantages, and enhancing that quality of life is an important component of the state's efforts to strengthen its economic competitiveness in the global economy.

### **Providing "Seed Capital" for New Arts and Cultural Ventures**

The NCCP has become, in effect, the "seed capital" of the arts and cultural sector in Maine, supporting pilot efforts that are now becoming established products and programs with follow-up funding from other sources. According to the grantee survey, close to a third of all grantees got some type of follow-up funding after completion of the NCCP project. MCAC partners also received follow-up funding from other sources that have built upon the results of the first round of NCCP funding.

For example, the Maine Historic Society received a \$377,000 grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, to support the further development of the Maine Memory Network, launched with NCCP funding.

## **What Was Learned About Policy Support for Arts and Culture?**

As other states look to increase public support for existing arts and cultural activities or to design new programs to strengthen their arts and cultural infrastructure, much can be learned from the experience of the NCCP in Maine. In their review of the NCCP's history and their interviews with legislators, Mt. Auburn Associates identified several key factors motivating the decision of the legislature, first, to allocate \$3.2 million for the NCCP's first round and, second, to allocate \$1 million in continued funding during a time of serious fiscal constraints.

### **Building a True Collaborative Initiative**

While there is increasing talk in the public-policy arena about the importance of collaboration, Mount Auburn Associates noted that it is rare to see a set of independent agencies give up some of their own self-interest to work together cooperatively. In this case, the partners in the Maine Cultural Affairs

Council effectively communicated to the legislators that they were willing to put aside their own interests for the common good. Further, the give-and-take in the creation of the NCCP resulted in the development of a clearly articulated set of policy outcomes and a well-designed set of grant programs based on each partner's strength and capacity.

The study identified two specific factors in winning legislative support for the NCCP:

***The unified front presented by the coalition of seven cultural agencies made a strong, positive impact on the legislators.***

In interviews, legislators stated that the MCAC's unified front was effective in making a strong case for funding, and made their work regarding the allocation of funding for arts and culture easier. Legislators were able to designate a single, large appropriation for arts and culture to the coalition, turning the distribution of funding over to those whom they perceive to be "experts" in the grantmaking process – experts who were committed to distributing the money equitably throughout the state.

***The involvement of seven separate agencies mobilized cohesive and diversified constituencies behind the NCCP.***

The ability to bring together the many constituencies of each agency was one of the greatest synergies associated with this collaborative initiative. Many of the affiliated organizations joined the campaign, distributing and strengthening MCAC's advocacy materials by personalizing the message for their membership and their legislative representatives. Moreover, the Maine Community Cultural Alliance (MCCA), an "umbrella" organization involved with cultural affairs for more than a decade and staffed wholly by volunteers, was a key organizational and financial ally in the legislative process.

### **Developing an Effective Policy Argument that Responded to the State's Concerns**

Mt. Auburn Associates singled out several elements in the design of the NCCP that were important in gaining the support of Maine policymakers. These included:

***The NCCP funds were distributed widely in Maine, providing support in both urban and rural communities.***

A key element was the coalition's commitment to awarding a broad range of small grants to communities throughout the state. For many, the statewide nature of the program reflected a recognition that culture comes in many forms and not only in cities. This was particularly important in Maine where there is a great divide between the more urban areas of southern Maine and the rest of the state, which is more rural.

***The initial status as a "pilot" effort with one-time funding helped garner support among legislators.***

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Many legislators had serious concerns about creating a new program that would require annual funding. However, by requesting initial funding for the NCCP as a one-time pilot effort, MCAC strengthened the initiative's ability to gain widespread legislative support in the initial authorization process. This also provided an opportunity for advocates to demonstrate the worth of the program and to build the foundation for "ongoing" support in the reauthorization process.

***The MCAC developed a set of strategic policy outcomes that resonated with residents and policymakers.***

The MCAC developed a coherent policy argument incorporating a clear and succinct articulation of anticipated outcomes in three areas – community development; literacy and education; and the preservation of the state's historic assets. These outcomes resonated with people in the state, who could identify, for example, with the need to improve their local libraries and educational resources, promote literacy, and strengthen the state's important tourism industry.

***The use of scarce state resources to leverage other public and private funds was an important part of the policy argument.***

The requirement that there be at least a 1:1 match for all of the grants made through the NCCP program was an important element of the design. The idea of matching funds was particularly important for the library construction and historic preservation programs. The actual experience in leveraging substantial additional funds in the first round of grants was used by the MCAC to make the case in the reauthorization process that scarce state funds were being efficiently utilized.

**Engaging Policymakers through Effective Advocacy and Education**

The MCAC, its partner agencies, and its supporters developed an impressive effort during both the 1999 and the 2001 legislative sessions to engage and persuade policymakers. As revealed in Mt. Auburn's evaluation, this effort involved a number of critical elements:

***The MCAC mobilized effective grassroots, localized advocacy.***

Legislators were impressed by the grassroots strength of NCCP – the number of its supporters, the range of those supporters' interests and their level of sophistication, and their broad geographic range, rural and urban.

***The MCAC database and evaluation provided a rich source of information.***

A complete database was assembled for every application to, and grant from, the NCCP, resulting in a rich source of information regarding the characteristics of grantees, their utilization of program funding, and their leveraging of matching funds. During the reauthorization process, consequently, the MCAC was able to provide legislators with comprehensive information about the program, including maps and lists of grants documenting both the geographic distribution and the wide range of organizations and activities funded.

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*The MCAC supported NCCP with high quality written materials.*

The high quality written materials that the NCCP developed during its funding campaigns, including brochures and information sheets, made an effective, persuasive presentation. The materials clearly communicated the intention, spirit, and values of the initiative. The arts and culture were broadly defined in a non-elitist manner, in language that policymakers could easily understand and communicate to their constituents, and that emphasized the opportunity for small organizations to pursue funding for a wide range of activities.

## **Mount Auburn's Conclusions**

Mt. Auburn Associates concluded that the NCCP provides an important model of effective statewide investment in arts and culture for both Maine and the rest of the country. The study cited the following achievements:

- The program used relatively limited state resources to create substantial benefits in communities throughout Maine. Its cash grants and other assistance have helped to preserve the history and cultural legacy of the state and to ensure that visitors, residents, and future generations are able to understand what is uniquely Maine.
  - While the long-term impacts of these activities are impossible to assess after only two years, a survey of grantees as well as in-depth case studies revealed that the program is building “social capital,” enhancing the state’s cultural tourism product, promoting increased literacy and workforce skills, and adding to the quality of life in many communities in all parts of the state.
  - While these outcomes cannot yet be fully translated into direct economic impacts, the evidence is clear that they are all important factors in improving the long-term economic health of Maine. Further, the success of the effort to create the NCCP demonstrates the far-reaching potential of a joint effort by several statewide cultural agencies to gain support for arts and culture funding initiatives on the state-level, if:
    - a large and committed constituency is engaged in the process;
    - the initiative appeals directly to legislators’ personal and constituent values and interests;
    - its importance is effectively communicated in ways that reflect those interests and values;
    - state government funding stimulates funding for arts and culture from other public and private sources, and
    - the statewide cultural agencies put aside their own self-interests to work collaboratively for their mutual benefit and the long-term interests of the residents of the state.
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## **NCCP Earns National Recognition**

Maine's NCCP is winning national recognition as a direct result of its innovative structure and achievements. In July, 2002, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the major funder of the Mt. Auburn evaluation, released a report listing Maine among ten states that have led the way in developing reliable statewide funding programs for arts and culture through coalitions of public and private agencies. The report, *Policy Partners: Making the Case for State Investments in Culture*, was supplemented by a second publication, *The Voice of State Legislators*, analyzing the Maine Legislature's decision to support the NCCP.

*Policy Partners* and Maine's NCCP have been the subject of discussion at recent national meetings of the National Conference of State Legislatures and National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. In releasing the report, Pew Trusts announced a grant to the Center for Arts and Culture, an independent, Washington, D.C., policy think tank, to lead a national one-year effort to help cultural leaders and policymakers learn from the success stories cited in the report. Partners in this effort will include the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Humanities Alliance, National Federation of State Humanities Councils, and American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress.

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## APPENDIX: Tables Supporting the “Report to Maine”

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>Allocation of First Round</b>	
<b>New Century Community Program Funding</b>	
Maine State Library: Library Development	\$1,292,400
Maine Historic Preservation Commission	\$506,000
Maine Arts Commission	\$460,000
Maine Humanities Council Grant Program	\$254,000
Maine Humanities Council: Center for the Book/ Direct Programs	\$230,000
Maine Historical Society: Maine Memory Network	\$220,000
Maine State Archives: Grant Program	\$88,000
Maine State Museum: Grant Program	\$88,000
Maine State Museum/Archives: CRIC	\$61,600
<b>Total Allocation</b>	<b>\$3,200,000</b>

<b>Table 2</b>		
<b>Grants By Program</b>		
<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Grants</b>	<b>Total Grant Amount</b>
Arts & Heritage Grants*	67	\$120,760
Arts: Community & Infrastructure	52	\$420,180
Historic Preservation Grants	36	\$440,500
Historic Preservation: Surveys	11	\$65,500
Humanities Project Grants	165	\$188,694
Library Area Reference Centers	2	\$200,000
Library Community Grant	46	\$363,480
Library Construction Grants	22	\$500,000
Library District Grant	5	\$78,840
Museum / Archives	101	\$175,997
<b>Total Grants and Projects</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>\$2,553,951</b>
<i>* A Joint Granting Program of the Maine Arts Commission and Maine Humanities Council</i>		
<i>Source: MCAC Database of the NCCP Program</i>		

**Table 3**  
**Funded Grants**

	# of Applications	# Funded Grants	Total Requested Funding	Total Approved Funding	Approved/ Requested Amount
Arts & Heritage Grants	68	67	\$126,409	\$120,760	96%*
Arts: Community &	70	52	\$957,494	\$420,180	44%
Historic Preservation	93	47	\$2,110,72	\$506,000	54%
Humanities	208	175	\$196,213	\$188,694	96%*
Library	85	75	\$2,410,47	\$1,142,3	47%
Museum / Archives	137	101	\$290,174	\$175,997	61%
<b>TOTAL Responding</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>\$6,091,48</b>	<b>\$2,553,9</b>	<b>42%</b>

*Source: Mt. Auburn Survey of NCCP Grantees*

\* The success rate for these grants is higher than that found in the other categories due to a policy of staff consultation with grantees prior to application to improve project design and maximize success for applicants, many of whom had little experience in grantwriting. This allowed unfundable projects to be diverted before the start of the application process.

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of New Century Grants by County**

County	Population	Total Approved Amount	Grant Dollars Per Capita
Androscoggin	103,793	\$81,494	\$0.79
Aroostook	73,938	\$170,714	\$2.31
Cumberland	265,612	\$639,501	\$2.41
Franklin	29,467	\$23,291	\$0.79
Hancock	51,791	\$145,581	\$2.81
Kennebec	117,114	\$281,401	\$2.40
Knox	39,168	\$74,719	\$1.91
Lincoln	33,616	\$136,750	\$4.07
Oxford	54,755	\$165,501	\$3.02
Penobscot	144,919	\$342,056	\$2.36
Piscataquis	17,235	\$43,554	\$2.53
Sagadahoc	35,214	\$48,275	\$1.37
Somerset	50,888	\$108,450	\$2.13
Waldo	36,280	\$67,199	\$1.85
Washington	33,941	\$75,118	\$2.21
York	186,742	\$145,345	\$0.78
Other		\$5,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,274,923</b>	<b>\$2,553,950</b>	<b>\$2.00</b>

*Source: MCAC Database of the NCCP Program*



County	Number of Grants	Number of Service Projects	Population	Number of Residents Per Project
Androscoggin	24	5	103,793	3,579
Aroostook	43	32	73,938	986
Cumberland	129	11	265,612	1,897
Franklin	8	29	29,467	796
Hancock	34	2	51,791	1,439
Kennebec	37	55	117,114	1,273
Knox	24	9	39,168	1,187
Lincoln	22	7	33,616	1,159
Oxford	29	6	54,755	1,564
Penobscot	54	17	144,919	2,041
Piscataquis	9	4	17,235	1,326
Sagadahoc	14	4	35,214	1,956
Somerset	20	17	50,888	1,375
Waldo	21	6	36,280	1,344
Washington	22	12	33,941	998
York	26	9	186,742	5,335
Other	1			
	517	225	1,274,923	1,718

*Source: MCAC Database of the NCCP Program*

	Projects	Grant Amount	Total Population	Per Capita Grants
City or town with less than 10,000 in population	330	\$1,483,592.53	887,800	\$1.70
Grant with Statewide Impacts	14	\$288,225.00	NA	NA
City or town with over 10,000 in population	173	\$782,133.35	387,643	\$2.00
<b>All Grantees</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>\$2,553,950.88</b>	<b>1,274,923</b>	<b>\$2.00</b>

*Source: MCAC Database of the NCCP Program*

**Table 7**  
**Grantee Perception of the Results of the New Century Grants**

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents	Arts and Heritage	Arts: Community and Infrastructure	Historic Preservation	Humanities Project Grants	Humanities: Book Program	Library Community Grant	Library Construction Grants	Museum / Archives Preservation
Increased number of visitors in the community	68	27%	50%	33%	31%	30%	0%	12%	77%	15%
Improved relationships with other organizations in the community	125	49%	64%	81%	19%	45%	11%	79%	54%	42%
Increased financial viability of your organizations	75	30%	29%	48%	35%	25%	5%	27%	54%	28%
Increased technical capacity of your organizations	67	26%	18%	19%	23%	8%	5%	52%	15%	38%
Increased audience for arts and cultural events	95	38%	68%	67%	23%	58%	58%	27%	15%	15%
Increased capacity to undertake arts and cultural-related development	103	41%	61%	76%	31%	35%	42%	42%	31%	31%
Enhanced community's image of itself	125	49%	68%	67%	58%	48%	32%	52%	77%	34%
Increased menu of cultural offerings in community	85	34%	50%	67%	19%	48%	42%	33%	46%	11%
Increased literacy	35	14%	11%	10%	0%	20%	32%	33%	8%	6%
Enhanced quality of public education in community	87	34%	36%	43%	12%	55%	26%	45%	38%	23%
Increased involvement of residents in civic organizations	55	22%	25%	29%	12%	28%	5%	30%	46%	15%
Increased awareness of importance of arts and cultural assets among public officials	90	36%	36%	57%	31%	35%	32%	36%	23%	35%

Source: Mt. Auburn Survey of Grantees

