he arts can be powerful chamber allies in solving challenges from education and workforce to health and crime prevention. Across the country, chambers and local arts agencies partner successfully to advance business and community goals.

Local Arts Agencies, also known as Arts & Business Councils or Business Committees for the Arts, work to ensure a vital presence for the arts in a community, and they perform different roles depending on a community's needs and resources. Most often, they work to sustain the local arts industry and make all of the arts accessible to the community by building partnerships between the arts and the private sector.

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia (ABC Philadelphia) and the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce are stellar examples of a successful and longstanding partnership. In 1981, ABC Philadelphia was started by the Greater Philadelphia Chamber and the national Arts & Business Council (now part of Americans for the Arts), and housed within the chamber.

The Greater Philadelphia Chamber and the national Arts & Business Council realized that this entity would be a valuable tool in leveraging new funds, funneling new resources, and cultivating new leadership from the business community to support nonprofit arts and cultural institutions in the Greater Philadelphia area. ABC Philadelphia is the only local arts agency in the U.S. that is directly affiliated with a chamber, and for 35 years this partnership has led to unique and important work in advancing both the arts and business sectors.

Rob Wonderling, president and CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber, said, “We care about regional growth—not only in terms of business metrics, but also in terms of the quality of life for our residents, the attractiveness of our city for visitors, and the levels of civic engagement and innovation that generate momentum.”

Creativity and Commerce

Today, ABC Philadelphia and the Greater Philadelphia Chamber break down barriers that once separated “arts” from “business,” by collaborating in programming that advances the arts, business, and broader community interests.

As a part of the chamber, ABC Philadelphia is at the intersection of creativity and commerce. ABC Philadelphia’s constituents include business, legal, technology, and creative professionals, which provides new ways to bring fresh perspectives and collaboration through unique programming. By providing rich professional development opportunities through its skills-based volunteering and leadership programs, ABC Philadelphia helps build a workforce with the key competencies of creativity and innovation, and develops new advocates for the creative sector.

ABC Philadelphia is focused on the people that make the Greater Philadelphia region an exciting place to live, work, and play.
You don’t know what you don’t know.

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and play. By creating platforms for the exchange of ideas, ABC Philadelphia ensures that various sectors of the community are engaged in ongoing conversations about solving problems.

**Leadership Opportunities**

For many years, ABC Philadelphia has provided skills-based volunteer and leadership opportunities to members of the chamber. These programs offer business, technology and legal professionals learning and leadership opportunities through volunteer consulting and nonprofit board service. Through these volunteer opportunities, business people bring new knowledge and perspectives back to the workplace.

Each year ABC Philadelphia welcomes dozens of new volunteers who use their business, legal, or technology expertise to build capacity in the creative community through several groups: Business Volunteers for the Arts, Technology Connectors and Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Each volunteer goes through an orientation session including an overview of the region’s cultural landscape, panel discussions with creative sector clients and volunteers, and case studies and role-playing exercises.

Business on Board provides an extensive training program for business people on effective board governance, and matches each participant with one of the hundreds of arts and cultural organizations in the region to observe a board in action. Most participants typically are mid- to senior-level professionals, although many young professionals being groomed for leadership roles find their way to this program.

Designing Leadership, launched in 2014, brings for-profit and non-profit creative professionals together for an in-depth executive development experience, with content delivered by The Wharton School and IBM.

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**Arts-Chamber Partners: Canton, Ohio**

ArtsinStark, Canton’s local arts agency, partnered with the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce on the creation of the Canton Arts District with the goal of revitalizing downtown Canton. Since the partnership began in 2005, more than 100,000 square feet of vacant space has been transformed to new uses.

The first art studios opened when a local developer converted an old building into an artist studio. ArtsinStark worked with the developer to spread the word and provided a small rent subsidy to artists for the first year. This initiative resulted in full occupancy at opening plus a wait list of future tenants.

To further promote the Canton Arts District, the group started First Friday, a monthly party with street performers, gallery openings, public art unveilings, and children’s parades. Attendance at these monthly celebrations ranged from 1,000-4,000.

Seeing the success of the revitalization efforts in downtown Canton, the chamber started purchasing old downtown buildings to create commercial parcels open to artists. An old bar that had been vacant for decades found new life as The Anderson Creative Gallery.

More than 100,000 square feet of vacant space has or is being transformed in downtown Canton because of the partnerships created with the chamber, ArtsinStark, and local artists. The group recently celebrated its 100th monthly First Friday, and the arts district remains the only one in Ohio with six professional art galleries within two blocks of one another. These successes have led to a new marketing campaign touting Canton as “the Best Arts District in Ohio” and “the best place in the world to buy a gift.”
Twelve years passed since Citslinc started to work with chambers on trip program in 2000. Now we work with 1,000 chambers in 50 states and Canada, and send over 20,000 passengers to China annually. We will be more than happy to work with you to promote the following trips in 2016 & 2017 (Package Rate start at $1,799).

1) 9-day China trip to visit Beijing, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai.
2) 9-day China trip to visit Beijing, Xi’an and Shanghai.
3) 9-day China trip to visit Beijing, Guilin and Shanghai.
4) 10-day China Yangtze River cruise.
5) 9-day China trip to visit Guilin, Kunming and Stone Forest.
6) 9-day trip to visit Chengdu China and Lhasa Tibet.
7) 9-day trip to visit Taipei, Hong Kong and Macao.
8) 9-day trip to visit Thailand and Hong Kong.

Please let me know your chamber interest by e-mail, so I can visit you for further discussion.

Leo Liu
President of Citslinc
Leadership Development

The newest offering, CreativeXchange, launched in 2015, is an interactive leadership development program that takes professionals out of the world of analytical thinking, and through the creative process leads them to understand and maximize their creative potential. The four-session program, led by top creative minds and art-makers, is designed for business, legal, and technology professionals. Participants discover creative approaches to problem solving, learn new points of view, increase their capacity for breakthrough ideas and moments of inspiration, and have a deeper understanding of innovation in the workplace. Along the way, they also get hands-on arts experiences, guided by a visual artist in one session and theater artists in another.

ABC Philadelphia and the Greater Philadelphia chamber offer many other ways for business leaders to enter the conversation about the benefits of cross-sector thinking, including speaker events featuring thought leaders such as Malcolm Gladwell, Arianna Huffington, Sheryl Sandberg, and Linda Hill of the Harvard Business School.

Arts-Chamber Partners: Richmond, Va.

The Greater Richmond Chamber led a variety of organizations in an initiative entitled i.e.* to focus on creativity and innovation to enable the business community to leverage the creative community in accomplishing business objectives, provide expanded audiences for the creative community, and foster new relationships and partnerships.

The chamber’s close relationship with CultureWorks, Richmond’s local arts agency, was helpful in the promotion of the value of the arts to businesses and the community via i.e.* and other programs. CultureWorks’ goal is to strengthen the arts and cultural sectors in the region, and it has been a great resource and supporter of i.e.* and other initiatives involving the chamber, Fortune 500 businesses, and other organizations.

A 2013 CultureWorks survey of 271 Richmond business executives showed that business executives who currently make art say the practice has a positive impact on their performance in the workplace.

This relationship between the Chamber and CultureWorks includes a 2012 project entitled “Creative Capital—Corporate Richmond Collects” that exhibited artwork from corporate collections of 15 of the city’s major companies. CultureWorks and the Greater Richmond Chamber hosted a reception for leaders from the business and arts communities to network and see the artwork. Programs like these encourage relationships among arts organizations, chambers, and the business community, and can lead to bigger initiatives that advance the entire community.
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Go to http://goo.gl/cxhNGv.

Enter your chamber’s FY2015 operations data, complete the Chamber Profile section, and answer yes to the CoY question.

Then, input your FY15 data in the Operations Survey by Feb. 26 to be considered for the 2016 CoY competition and to be entered in a drawing for a free convention registration.

Email HERO@acce.org with your questions or use the new live chat service.

WANTED
Dynamic Chambers seeking to compare themselves, number-to-number, with other chambers.

Galleries at the Chamber
The partnership is reflected within the chamber itself. Since 2013, ABC Philadelphia has been transforming public spaces at the chamber into “The Galleries at the Chamber” with curated exhibitions of paintings, works on paper, and photography featuring regional artists from the Center for Emerging Visual Artists. In addition to the exhibition, ABC Philadelphia hosts receptions where attendees meet the artists and network with other arts-minded professionals.

ABC Philadelphia’s commitment to the creative sector also includes fashion designers, architects, graphic designers, technology experts, scientists, innovators, and “makers” in every kind of enterprise, from students to start-ups to seasoned business executives. In a recent Forbes article, author and consultant Steve Denning defined the creative economy as “the economy that keeps generating new products and services.” He wrote: “Because it delights its customers and continuously adds value, this economy is thriving.”

Emily Peck is vice president of Private Sector Initiatives, Americans for the Arts. Karin Copeland is executive director of the Arts & Business Council of Philadelphia.