

# A&E Districts Program Overview

## A&E Districts Program Goal

The State's goal for the A&E Districts program is to develop, promote, and support diverse artistic and cultural centers in communities throughout Maryland that preserve a sense of place, provide unique local experiences, attract tourism, and spur economic revitalization and neighborhood pride.

Strategies supported by the program include but are not limited to:

- creating accessible and unique arts destinations;
- leveraging the State's regional identities, natural resources, and heritage;
- facilitating opportunities for dynamic arts experiences that actively engage community members and attract visitors;
- enabling artists of all disciplines to live, work, and create an economically prosperous future; and
- investing in the power of place.

In addition, A&E Districts further Maryland's goals of reinvesting in existing communities and creating places that help people, businesses, the economy, and the environment thrive as articulated in the Maryland Department of Planning's [Reinvest Maryland](#) strategy. To this end, districts must be located within Priority Funding Areas and are expected to carefully coordinate with local plans and policies for economic development, including by thoughtfully engaging with other state designation programs.

## Activities

MSAC recognizes that each A&E District is designated to promote its unique identity and leverage local connections to further its own goals as well as the designation program's goal. Districts may engage in a variety of activities in the course of this work, as determined by local needs and opportunities. This work ultimately networks the district in order to maintain a healthy ecosystem of artists, businesses, and spaces. Activities of A&E Districts may include:

- General promotion of the district, its benefits, and the activities and businesses within it
- Event/festival production and management
- Business attraction
- Providing support services for local artists (local artist registries, connections between artists and businesses, professional development workshops, etc.)
- Providing arts-related support services for businesses (creating opportunities and connecting non-arts businesses with artists, attracting and promoting arts-related businesses, etc.)
- Public art project management and implementation
- Promoting available real estate
- Managing partnerships/collaborations
- Facilitating coordination with overlapping designation programs (e.g. Main Streets Maryland)
- Other general activities, including: fundraising, board management, advocacy, etc.

## Expectations

The expectations of MSAC and of A&E Districts receiving operating support outlined below are intended to support A&E Districts' abilities to best serve their local constituencies and meet district goals while furthering the State's goal for the program.

MSAC is responsible for:

- Providing funding, guidance, resources, and support to aid in the creation and implementation of A&E Districts long-term planning efforts.
- Providing tools and resources to aid in A&E Districts' infusion of equity and justice in all aspects of their work.
- Maintaining MSAC grantmaking and reporting schedules, facilitating A&E Districts' access to MSAC application and reporting materials, and providing technical support as needed.
- Soliciting professional development needs and providing professional development opportunities for A&E District managers as well as technical assistance to individual districts and their constituents as needed or requested.
- Publicizing A&E Districts' opportunities, programs, and events.
- Sharing the impact of A&E Districts statewide.
- Responding to local needs and concerns communicated by A&E Districts through scheduled reports and other communications.
- Making at least one site visit per fiscal year to each district to meet with leadership, board, and/or constituents to assess needs and share ideas and opportunities.

Each A&E District is responsible for:

- Adhering to all grantmaking, crediting, and reporting requirements, as communicated by MSAC.
- Maintaining programs, events, projects, communication tools, vendors, and resources that are responsive to identified needs of the community and equitably benefit all district constituents.
- Maintaining a website or website page that publicizes the A&E District as well as its tax credits and other incentives, opportunities, and events, with links to MSAC's site and relevant opportunities for local constituents.
- Maintaining a distribution list of local constituents.
- Sending regular communications (email, social media, and/or print, etc.) promoting A&E District and MSAC opportunities.
- Maintaining a current profile page on MSAC's website.
- Notifying MSAC at least two months ahead of deadlines of available local grant opportunities relevant to artists.
- Providing MSAC with ongoing updates of local needs and concerns through scheduled reports and additional communications.
- Arranging at least one site visit per year for MSAC to meet with A&E District leadership, board, and/or constituents to assess needs and share ideas and opportunities.