

Jan 23, 2013, 12:21pm EST

## Study will put a valuation on arts, culture



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Buffalo Business First Reporter- *Business First*

With its first full year completed, the Arts Services Initiative of WNY is looking ahead with plans to create an economic impact report for the nonprofit cultural sector as well as new programming.

The financial report, last collected in 2005, will use figures collected for the group's cultural data project as well as new information. The report will show not only how much revenue is generated in the community from cultural events and activities, but also map out where programming is available, at which businesses cultural are spending money and where board members and subscribers are located.

“Visually we’ll be able to show the impact of culture in the community,” said [Tod Kniazuk](#), executive director. “It will be another good advocacy tool to see if arts and culture are present or impacting your community.”

In its first year, the group rolled out a health insurance program for artists through the [Amherst Chamber of Commerce](#); provided a series of training opportunities for artists; and cultural administrators; and administered grants for the New York State Council for the Arts. It also organized programming along Canalside and the Buffalo River region for the [Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp.](#)

Those programs will continue, along with the launch of new programs like the Art Access Program, which will connect low-income individuals with cultural programming opportunities.

Art Access, with \$48,237 in funding by the Regional Economic Development Council, will offer free or low-cost tickets to theater productions to individuals with benefits cards, and will also provide transportation to expand access to individuals outside the city. It also will help theaters fill empty seats, while growing awareness, Kniazuk said.

“There’s a little bit of a revenue component for the culturals, but also it will be audience-building for them,” he said. “But it also goes along with the idea that culture should be available to all.”

Both programs build on a series of accomplishments from ASI’s first year, a year that exceeded expectations, said [Randall Kramer](#), board president and artistic/executive director at MusicalFare Theatre at [Daemen College](#).

“ASI has a unique place in that yes, we’re doing services for culturals and yes, we are about capacity-building for the cultural sector, but really we are maybe the only organization that is looking at the community as a whole and figuring out how to integrate cultural efforts into the community,” he said.

ASI was formed in August 2011, bringing together Advancing Arts and Culture, Arts Partners for Learning, Young Audiences of WNY and the Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance, which serves as the advocacy and awareness arm of the group. Its mission is to grow capacity, advocacy and collaboratives among nonprofit cultural groups, as well as develop partnerships and collaborations with the business sector.

Kniazuk said the organization is now going through strategic planning for 2013 and beyond.

“We’ve accomplished a lot, and now it’s about keeping the momentum on all those things going, while strategically adding a few initiatives we can bring into the stable,” he said.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2013/01/23/study-will-put-a-valuation-on-arts.html?ana=&page=all>