

Dear Colleague:

Please read this entire document before beginning your company's online survey. It contains important contact information, details on the submission and reporting process and helpful hints to get started.

The Cultural Data Project's Data Profile survey form was developed by the Cultural Data Project (CDP) over four years and is based on input from the arts sector and private and public funders. Participating arts and cultural organizations in seven states currently complete the CDP at the end of each fiscal year. Now for the first time, through its work for OPERA America, the CDP is not only going national, but also international, as our Canadian professional company members will be able to input their data as well.

CDP Data Profile (Sections 1-12)

The types of data collected include basic organizational information and a wide range of financial and non-financial information, including: revenues, expenses, marketing activities, balance sheet items, investments, loans, contributor and attendance numbers, facilities, pricing, capital and endowment campaigns, program activity and staffing. Professional Member Companies of all sizes can complete the Data Profile, utilizing only the line items applicable to them. This standardized form, in use by thousands of organizations in the participating states, allows for accurate comparisons across regions.

Using powerful reporting tools, the CDP enables participating organizations to track trends and benchmark their progress; empowers researchers and advocates with information to make the case for arts and culture; and equips funders with data to plan and evaluate grant-making activities more effectively. OPERA America Professional Company Members are the latest beneficiaries and can use the CDP to instantly produce a variety of benchmarking reports designed to help increase management capacity, identify strengths and challenges and inform decision-making. These reports allow members to compare themselves to financially-similar organizations throughout the non-profit world. OPERA America members in CDP states (California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania) can use the CDP as one part of the grant application to participating funders, and as others states adopt the CDP, more and more member organizations will share this benefit.

As you complete the CDP Data Profile, during business hours you will have toll-free access to [Help Desk and User Support](#) assistance as well as free access (by phone) to a team of financial consultants specializing in accounting for nonprofits.

NOTE: If your organization has participated in the CDP in another state, please call the CDP Help Desk (877-707-DATA) to gain access to the OPERA America CDP site. Your previously-entered CDP data will be available on the OPERA America CDP Site.

Professional Opera Survey Form (Sections 13-19)

The Professional Opera Survey Form is comprised of seven sections, designed to capture more

detailed, opera-specific data to supplement the CDP Data Profile. A “short-form” version is available for companies with budgets under \$1,000,000.

Sections 13 through 16 include detail on performances, attendance, and box office revenue; Section 17 collects information on production costs and other department expenses not already captured through the CDP Data Profile; Section 18 covers separately incorporated entities; and Section 19 asks for detail about assets released from restriction. The CDP Data Profile “talks” to the Opera Survey as you are filling it out, so when you start the Opera Survey you will see that some fields have already been auto-pulled from the CDP Profile. These auto-pulls ensure accuracy between the forms and serve as an error-check in cases of discrepancy.

The CDP Data Profile and Opera Survey may be worked on simultaneously. However, since totals from CDP Sections 1-12 will affect data in OPERA America Sections 13-19, **you must complete and submit the CDP Data Profile before you can submit the Opera Survey.**

If you have any questions or concerns as you complete the Opera Survey, you can call me at 212-796-8620 ext. 212 or email me at LBomback@operaamerica.org.

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT: OPERA America requires that an audited financial statement be submitted along with your completed survey. Please email or mail your audited financial statement to me after you have submitted your survey.

Benchmarking Surveys for Development, Marketing and Education

OPERA America’s annual Development, Marketing and Education Benchmarking Surveys have also been moved online. After you have submitted both the CDP Data Profile and the Opera Survey, you will receive an email providing you with links to the survey forms that you should forward to the staff within your organization who normally complete these forms. Duplicate data already submitted in the CDP Data Profile and Opera Survey will auto-fill certain fields in the Benchmarking Surveys in order to ensure accuracy across departments.

Taken as a whole, these powerful online management tools will streamline the annual data collection process and provide all statistics for future Professional Opera Survey and Benchmarking Reports.

NOTE: Participating organizations will still receive a hard-copy of the annual Professional Opera Survey Report for their budget level as well as electronic reports for all budget levels.

Submission Process

In the past, paper surveys had been due in mid-April, but that due date was often extended because so many companies were still in production. We have responded by generously extending the submission deadline to **May 31, 2010** for all surveys – the CDP Data Profile, the Opera Survey and the Development, Marketing and Education Benchmarking Surveys. **Note, however, that this is a firm deadline.** In order to provide the quickest possible turnaround, we are automating the process of creating the Professional Opera Survey Report and the data for that

report will be pulled from these online survey forms on June 1, 2010. *Please note that completion of these surveys is a requirement for membership in good standing.*

The first year of this new endeavor will require a lot of preparation and early submission is encouraged so that errors are identified and remedied before the deadline.

I would strongly recommend that you first print out paper forms of the CDP Data Profile and Opera Survey by clicking here: <http://operaamerica.culturaldata.org/sampleForms.aspx>. Sharing these forms with your staff and gathering the necessary data *before* you start actually inputting numbers into the online survey will save you many headaches! (I know from experience, since OPERA America fills out the Data Profile for the New York State CDP).

I will be hosting a webinar with Jessica Cahail, a representative from the Cultural Data Project on **Friday January 29**. During the webinar I will walk participants through both surveys as if I were filling it out for a typical opera company. I will also show you how to create instantaneous benchmarking reports that you can present to board members and other stakeholders. The webinar will be archived for later viewing.

Please see the [New User Orientation](#) and [Instructions](#) pages for further information. To learn more about the CDP, please visit www.culturaldata.org.

[CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED!](#)

Best regards,



Larry Bomback
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OPERA America